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ABSTRACT

Focusing on innovation and experimentation in the language arts, K-16, the articles in this volume of "The English Record" include: "Meeting Our Enemies: Career Education and the Humanities" by S. P. Marland, Jr.; "Hope for Research in English Education" by James Squire; "New York State and Certification by Competency" by Vincent Gazzetta; "English Without Walls" by Bruce Crawford; "Retraining to Teach English Mini Courses" by Robert Leonard; "New English: From Theory to Practice by Patrick Courts; "The Question of Black Studies--An Analysis" by Louis Osti; "The Film Course That Died" by Kenneth McCluskey; "Ten Questions Most Often Asked of 'Foxfire'" by B. Eliot Wigginton; "A No-Red-Pencil Composition Program" by Elizabeth Acheson; "Push It Around and Think About It" by James Symula; "Using the Open Concept in Freshman English" by Nancy Sandberg; "The Literary Response Process of College Students" by Richard Beach; "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Having a Poet in the School but Didn't Know Who to Ask" by Myra Klahr; and "An ERIC/RCS Review: On Teaching Shakespear." by Daniel Dieterich. (HOD)

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Guest Editor: Richard L. Knudson

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EDITORIAL

Hey! Hey! Is Anybody Listening?

Richard L. Knudson

Guest editor of this special issue of The English Record *is Richard L. Knudson who teaches at the State University College at Oneonta. His articles on English Education have appeared in* The English Record, English Journal, Research in the Teaching of English, *and* English Education.

This contemporary hymn's title is as appropriate for English Educators as it is for the church. Is anybody listening? Can you hear me? If you can, welcome to the special issue of *The English Record* devoted to "Experimentation and Innovation in the Language Arts, K-16." This issue will go to approximately fifteen hundred dues-paying, *English Record*-collecting, conference-going English teachers.

I wonder how carefully this journal is read. Does it do more than decorate book shelves in the homes of English teachers across the Empire State? I'm not sure . . . . I'm not sure.

Every issue of the *Record* includes articles about English Education? Do the articles make any difference in the way English is taught? The editorial office of the *Record* needs feedback. We often think that a particular article is going to prompt some lively correspondence because of its particular point of view; the mailbox, sadly, remains empty. Our subscribers (readers?) have not yet been aroused to the point where they want to refute or support an article.

Do we pay our dues as a debt to the profession and then continue doing as we have always done? What does make a difference? Can we change? Should we change? Have you changed? We think so. The pages of this journal are always open to the opinions of teachers. In English Education we are only beginning to discover the potential that professional sharing has for making important changes in our schools. Please consider this an invitation to share your professional ideas, successes, failures, and opinions in future issues of *The Record.*

We hope you find the content of this special issue useful. We think our authors have provided a wide array of topics to interest English educators everywhere.

Is anybody listening . . .

MEETING OUR ENEMIES: Career Education and the Humanities

By S. P. Marland, Jr.

Dr. Marland is, perhaps, America's best known educator. He is presently Assistant Secretary for Education in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in Washington, D.C.

For reasons that I hope become clear later on, my assigned topic reminds me of a comment by one of our lesser known Presidents, Franklin Pierce (1853 to 1857), reinforced by a better known personality, Pogo. While Pierce may not flash to mind when drawing up a list of Great Americans, Pogo may well qualify.

Pierce is quoted from 1855, two years after he assumed the Presidency. The occasion was an off-year election, in which Mr. Pierce's followers hopefully submitted themselves to the verdict of the voters — and were thoroughly trounced. Reading the dismaying returns, Mr. Pierce commented: "We have met the enemy — and we are theirs." Pogo's well-known paraphrase, you will recall, is, "We have met the enemy and they are us." (I cannot help wishing that he had had greater respect for an intransitive verb and the predicate nominative. But I am afraid "They are we" just isn't Pogo.)

I anticipate the gist of my remarks today by suggesting that humanists — among whom, as an English teacher, I number myself — have done much the same. We have met the enemy, and we are theirs — or, possibly, they are we. In any event, today I want to talk about an enemy, *our* enemy, and about the decades-long process by which we have allowed ourselves to be steadily trounced by those who regard our discipline as a genteel but fundamentally trivial concern with sweetness, light, and iambic pentameter, and unrelated to the utilitarian world.

The NCTE Executive Secretary, Mr. Hogan, tells me that many of you are disquieted by the notion of career education and concerned about its potential effect on curriculum and asks that I deal with the subject. I welcome the opportunity, for I see a close tie between career education and the humanities, and hence interpret this visit as a time for some gentle proselytizing.

First, what *is* career education as viewed by the Division of Education in Washington? It is essentially an instructional strategy, aimed at improving educational outcomes by relating all teaching and learning activities to the concept of career development.

This statement may confirm your worst fears. If I had to guess at those fears, I would say they run something like this: "Career education is the mad culmination of the 'relevance' kick of recent years. It is a rejection by the Federal Government of the liberal, humanistic tradition in education in favor of a strictly pragmatic, utilitarian approach focused entirely on employment and income. Career education is, in fact, a euphemism for mechanistic job-training and it is fundamentally anti-intellectual."

I'm overstating, perhaps, but I nonetheless suspect that those remarks come pretty close to expressing sentiments of some academic teachers in the high schools and colleges of America. As you would expect, I disavow each of them — for reasons that I hope you will find convincing by the time I finish. But because abstract argument is so rarely convincing, let me go at this discussion by examining, first, the specific substance of career education.

We conceive of career education as beginning in kindergarten or first grade. Until the sixth grade, there would be no attempt to *train* students. All we are aiming at in these early years is developing an awareness of careers, a personal realization that each student will spend most of his or her life doing or being something — and that "something" will be largely determined by work. *Work* may or may not carry economic motivations — but it is seen as the product of useful living. Also, we want to give the young a sense of the remarkable number of options that will be open to them, to inform them of the manifold ways by which adults in this society go about the business of living productively.

The latest Department of Labor *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* lists about 23,000 different occupations. Obviously we cannot hope to teach youngsters [illegible]h about so great a number. However, we *can* group the [illegible]ajority of those titles into clusters of related occupations. A hospital orderly, a medical technician, a nurse, and a brain-surgeon, for example, are all related, so we refer to these as being in the "health cluster."

We have identified 15 such clusters. The others are agri-business and natural resources; business and office; communication and media; consumer and homemaking; construction; environment; fine arts and humanities; hospitality and recreation; manufacturing; marine science; marketing and distribution; personal services; public service, and transportation. It's worth noting, for this audience, that the "fine

arts and humanities" cluster includes poet, novelist, and painter. We are not trying to turn everybody into a machinist.

Clusters reduce the 23,000 occupational possibilities to a manageable number so that we can develop curricular materials around them. Inasmuch as most of the curricular effort at this point is being directed at the secondary level, however, most of the classroom activity for elementary-level career education must come from the initiative and imagination of individual teachers — and some interesting things have been happening all around the country under our model development system.

A fourth-grade teacher in one Michigan community, for example, invited an industrial physicist from a nearby Pontiac facility to talk to her youngsters. His talk related conveniently to some of the concepts the class had been discussing in science. But in language arts, the youngsters had been discussing interviewing techniques, and after the physicist put his equipment away, he was grilled by the class: How long did he have to study for his job? Did he have to go to college? Was it important for a physicist to like science and math as a child? Did he get good grades in those subjects when he was in school? How much money did he make?

It was, in sum, a genuine interview, motivated by honest curiosity. They were *real* questions, asked by youngsters who wanted to *know* something. During the year, 90 adults from different occupations — the mayor, an electrician, an insurance salesman, a beautician — visited that one school, opening for those youngsters a window on the world in a real way that no amount of lecturing or reading could have accomplished. In our present culture it is very difficult for a child to walk beside his father at the plow and learn about work. We are trying to find substitutes.

In seventh and eighth grade, youngsters move beyond this broad occupational awareness phase. By this time, they know something about all the clusters, and have begun to relate them to their own interests. They have learned quite a bit, too, about their own aptitudes — which subjects they're good in, which ones they're so-so in, which ones they find the most fun.

They know enough about themselves and about careers, in short, to make a reasonably solid judgement about which of the 15 clusters appeal to them most, and to choose a few — we think three is a good number — for more systematic exploration. And in ninth grade, after two years of this narrowing exploration, they will know enough about the three occupational clusters they've been studying to make a tentative selection of one as their field for further and more concentrated career preparation. It is important to underscore tentative,

since career education calls for open options at all levels of learning.

It is at this point (at about age 13-14) that something undeniably and unblushingly recognizable as job-training begins. Our goal is that during the last four years of schooling — the ninth through twelfth grades — every youngster will develop entry-level job skills that will qualify him for employment upon leaving school, *whenever* he leaves.

I repeat, *every* youngster — including those who intend to go on to college or some other form of postsecondary education. If, by tenth grade, a girl has decided that she wants to take a Ph.D. in molecular biology, fine; not only are we for her, but we stand in awe of her knowledge of what the words mean. Recognizing the uncertain nature of life and the changeability of young minds and spirits, however, we want to give her a fallback position if her plans don't work out — to make sure that she can qualify for a good job even if she leaves high school *before* graduation. Moreover, even if that job won't be at the level to which she originally aspired, at least she will have adequate skills in an occupational area that interests her — in this case, the health cluster. Finally, if her circumstances *do* improve, she retains the option and the qualification to return for higher academic training — at any time — perhaps years later.

This is a major point to be made about each of the occupational clusters: each includes a range of employment opportunities that can accommodate every type of aptitude, every level of intellect. The construction cluster, for instance, has room for young men who prefer outdoor, manual labor — and, these days, for young women who prefer outdoor, manual labor. This cluster also has room for entrepreneurs who aspire to operate their own contracting business someday. It has room for engineers concerned with the strength of materials, and for architects concerned with beauty and function. And it has room for new specialties emerging in economics and other social sciences, not the least being new fields such as environmental science, urban planning, and new-town management.

In our thinking about occupations and careers, then, we have been careful to make room for the hands and the hammer and the honest skill it takes to drive a nail straight. But we give equal voice to the imagination and the spirit, for the man who cannot fix a faucet but can dream a new concept of community. These are all parts of one whole, each with its own dignity and importance, and we make no apology for teaching the future architect what the carpenter does or teaching the future carpenter the liberalizing joys of Robert Browning and Edna St. Vincent Millay. It is well past time for our educational institutions to help eliminate prejudice based on work — to overcome the idea, passed on to us by our own parents, that some jobs are worthy and some are not, that some family heads are

to be respected and others scorned, and that the best way to tell the difference is to see whether the wage earner owns a college degree or wears a tie to work.

By twelfth grade, then, our plan is that career education will have prepared every youngster for an entry-level job in the occupational cluster of his choice. We remind ourselves that we will have about 22 percent of our young dropping out before high school graduation. If career education does not entice them to stay, at least we believe it will qualify them for something better than the streets.

But career education is not merely job-getting. Nor is it a competitor or adversary to the high traditions of academic teaching and learning. The academic skills are still the school's principal *raison d'etre.* But we believe young people in school and college will learn them better, with more ease and interest, because their mathematics, language arts, sciences, and social studies have been related to purposes which students perceive as important to their own future lives. Career education is not a substitute for the old curriculum, even though it entails the use of some new materials; rather, it is a new *context* for learning, a new way of viewing curriculum. Every teacher knows that the single, most powerful teaching force in a classroom is motivating students. We believe that career education will do that, at any level the student finds personally significant. All good teachers have intuitively and sensitively tried to relate learning to life. Career education moves us along this road, systematically, hopefully with richer materials and a better knowledge on the part of the learner as to why he is learning.

The result will be better preparation for whatever path the student chooses to follow after leaving high school, or after high school graduation. He can get a job. He can enter a technical institute for more intensive, specialized preparation for a career. Or he can enter a four-year college — and with a much better sense of direction than most young adults bring to college today.

This has been a once-over-lightly treatment of career education as it is unfolding today as a high priority in the Office of Education.

One could go on at length, scolding ourselves over the failure of the schools to equip approximately half of our newly enfranchised 18-year-olds for college *or* a job. I will not labor it. Suffice it to say here that the Office of Education is not under any delusion concerning the need for reform and the complexities of the task.

We know that relating academic teaching to the career theme cannot be accomplished in a bureau in Washington. Hence, we have established 15 advisory groups made up of teachers and practitioners

in each of the occupational clusters to help us relate job requirements to basic academic skills. We have contracted with some of the Nation's leading curriculum specialists to develop high school curricula for five of the 15 clusters so far — construction, manufacturing, transportation, public service, and communications and media. Several should be ready for pilot-testing next year. We expect to fund development of two more cluster curriculums, probably sales and office occupations, shortly.

I am using your valuable time to describe the career education theme in some detail — because this particular audience at this particular time is very important to the success of career education (if it ultimately *is* successful), and because I want you to know that we have not undertaken this objective lightly. Learning from educational experiments of the past, we do not believe that a few snappy slogans and some Fedeal money can accomplish any serious educational reform — and we are very candidly talking about reform. We have a staggering amount of thinking, experimentation, and refining to do, and probably a distressing number of mistakes still to make.

But at this point I want to depart from explaining what career education is in itself to talk about its relation to the humanities, because I think that you — and all other educators interested in the humanities, the liberal arts — also have some thinking to do, and some work to do, if the proposition is found worthy of your interest.

By now you have formed some tentative impressions about career education. With luck, my lyricism on the subject has lulled you into agreeing that career education need not spell the "Death of Intellect in the West," and that it will still be possible for a student to pursue truth and beauty, not to mention syntax and composition, without first investigating how much it pays per hour. But some of you, I'm sure, are still unconvinced — and in sincere respect for your misgivings, I want to turn to a necessarily brief discussion of what may be the continuing evolution of the liberal tradition in education.

Most Americans, I believe, think of formal academic education as a privilege that was once restricted to the elite in society, but gradually — after great struggle and the passage of centuries — became accessible to the less favored masses, to virtually everyone, in fact, who seeks it in our country. This hypothesis leads to a hasty assumption in the light of general human experience, which is that nice things are found first by the favored.

But with education, it is not true. Education in Western Europe, and notably in England, did *not* start at the top. It started in the middle. During most of the middle ages, both serfs *and* the nobles were illiterate. It was only the ambitious sons of the embryonic middle

class who saw education as their avenue to upward-mobility. (Parenthetically, this phenomenon is now dominant in America, as we seek upward mobility for our own least favored.) Returning to the Middle Ages, there were two acceptable opportunities through schooling: a career in the Church or a career as a merchant. For such careers literacy was an absolute essential. As late as the 18th century, some members of the House of Lords were still illiterate. If you find this difficult to believe, open your Henry Fielding, study Squire Western, and ask yourself if Oxford or Cambridge would claim him as an alumnus. For a more recent reference, open your Evelyn Waugh, study Sir Alastair Trumpington of *Decline and Fall,* and ask yourself if his presence at Scone College had any discernible relation to education.

It was not until the Renaissance, with the rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman literature and language, that learning became fashionable for the upper classes. From this era, in fact, we can date the beginning of humanism in western Europe. For the first time, men could read something about themselves as men, could consider the human experience as something important in itself rather than as a reflection of the omnipotence of God, and significant therefore only in relation to afterlife and the certainties of death, judgement, heaven, or hell. And it was only after the Renaissance that the sons of wealthy men began entering the universities, competing with and often crowding out less affluent scholars. Chaucer gives us a picture of university students in the early 13th century; they were all broke.

The point is that formal education in the West started with a distinctly occupational orientation. It was *not* learning for its own sake. It was learning for a specific career purpose such as demanded by the market place, the church, the money lender, the healer. But with the entrance of the rich into higher education came a gradual isolation of learning from work. Rich young men, after all, would not *have* to work. For them, cultivation of intellect became desirable in itself, apart from any use to which a trained mind might be put.

The influx of affluent students, their freedom from the necessity of vocational preparation, the prestige of their superior status, and the secular subjects then available for study shaped the form and substance of classical education, including a gradual cleavage between liberal and utilitarian studies. Thus, some very eloquent spokesmen for the liberal tradition received a distinctly vocational education without recognizing it. John Henry Newman, for example, whose *Idea of a University* remains a classic of literature as well as of educational theory, studied Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and the Church Fathers. This is as distinctly *un*-vocational an education as one can imagine — unless one is studying to be, as Newman became, an ecclesiastical scholar of heroic proportions.

It seems to me that many of us who care about the humanities and work in them daily are laboring under an intellectual misconception about where we came from. Anxious sustainers of the truth, we man the battlements of our ancient castle, ready to defend it against the onslaught of science and auto mechanics and data-processing and other heathen disciplines as though they were the other side, rather than our companions. Believing that nobody over 21 will pay any attention, we vainly and self-destructively repeat unexamined formulas: "The liberal arts do not teach one how to make a living," we say, "they teach one how to live." What awful nonsense. While English teachers can rightly account for the infinite array of human need to which we bend our profession, the humanities in general need our support in the larger sense.

It is high time for us to examine more closely what we refer to as our "tradition in the humanities," and to ask ourselves whether we are passing it on alive and young, rejuvenated by our own fresh interpretation of the meaning of the humanities for a changing world, or whether we are simply handing on an old package that somebody else told us was valuable. Knowledge is *not* its own end. If it were, there would be no qualitative difference between reading Toynbee and reading the World Almanac. Both convey knowledge, but the manner of the conveyance is the difference between a towering intellectual performance that lifts the spirit and commands admiration, and a compendium of facts that occasionally comes in handy. None of us reads poetry for the sake of reading a poem. We read good poetry for intellectual and aesthetic pleasure — and intangible as these pleasures are, they are just as *real* as the pleasures that come from enjoying a good meal, playing a good game of tennis, or getting a good contract signed on the dotted line. These various forms of pleasure satisfy human appetites, and even though we properly distinguish among these appetites and may rank some above others, they nevertheless crave satisfaction in all of us.

What has this homily to do with career education?

There is a saying from the Talmud that goes like this: "When you stop working, you're dead." As I interpret it, this does not mean that the foreman will shoot if you lay down your shovel, or the Superintendent will frown if your daily planning book is awry. It means, rather, that when you stop working at your*self*, when you regard yourself as a finished piece of goods with no prospect of growth or surprise or becoming, then you are indeed, as the advertisement says, "dead at 30, retired at 65." Work, in other words, has a *central position in the fashioning of a satisfactory human life,* and I hold this to be true especially for those who dare to teach the young! We do not teach for money, nor for status, nor for some fatuous prominence, but for facilitating human happiness. And if the humanities

have nothing to say to students about a matter so crucial to their future contentment and fulfillment as work, then I must ask whether humanists have not become futile curators of a world that vanished years ago, when the nobility discovered Latin.

If universal affluence ever breaks out, and the problems of poverty blessedly go away, we won't have to look far for other problems to solve: boredom, for example, is staring us in the face, and boredom — as any psychiatrist, clergyman, or marriage counselor can tell you — is a serious, pervasive human problem. Its remedies rest in the resources possessed by English teachers, music teachers, physical education teachers, art teachers, history teachers, social scientists.

Humanists must lend a hand in reinterpreting for our society the vital significance of work for man and its place in any modern conception of education. There *are* important, worthwhile distinctions to be made between liberal and utilitarian studies — but we humanists have not been making them. Instead we have acquiesced in a cynical perspective that views work as something we put up with between nine and five so we can do what interests us after the plant closes down. At its worst, work is a dreary, painful chore. At its best in our society — a society that can name 23,000 different jobs — work is an opportunity for self-exploration; at its best, work *is* a humanity — and we have the chance to help our youngsters approach work as their intellectual and personal fulfillment. If teaching is not that, then what is it?

Career education aims at fulfilling some undeniably pragmatic goals, partially definable in terms of Gross National Product, taxes paid, employment increased, and welfare payments no longer needed. But it also probes some deeply human concerns, and if the humanities can stand passively by while so many human beings hurt — while so many human beings know *how* to, but have forgotten *why* to — then I must ask what the humanities are for.

We need humanists to help us elaborate and refine this concept of career education. We need humanists to guide our groping for these deeper human concerns on the job and off the job. And it may be that *we humanists ourselves need such a highly utilitarian exercise* to sweep us back into youth and remind us of our original purpose — which is to buttress the spirit with the knowledge that another man, in another time, passed this way before, suffered and joyed as we do, and paid his dues for the magnificent privilege and heavy responsibility of being human, especially in this remarkable land of ours. Neither centuries nor social station can separate us; only our own intellectual myopia can.

Look around. Our beleaguered castle is not really being assaulted

by the champions of other disciplines called occupation. They're not attacking our fortress at all. They're just detouring around it, because so many of them, including students, don't think we guard anything worth taking. If we in the humanities continue to regard more "practical" people as our enemies, and if we continue to be theirs — it will be our own damn fault.

As one proud and devoted English teacher, who has made a pragmatic career of what my English teachers taught me, I thank you for the courtesy of your attention, and if I have seemed critical, it is not to offend but to share with you a new idea that may or may not be successful. It will not succeed unless you and the millions of other teachers of the humanities find it valid — and make it your own.

This speech was delivered to the Conference on English Education luncheon sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, at the annual NCTE convention.

Hope for Research in English Education

James R. Squire

James R. Squire, currently Senior Vice President and Editor in Chief of Ginn and Company, is presently Chairman of the Committee on Research of the National Council of Teachers of English. Executive Secretary of NCTE from 1959-1967, Mr. Squire has published numerous books, studies, and articles in English Education.

Research in English Education requires radical redirection if it is to play a major role in shaping future changes in curriculum and instruction. Such was the general consensus of some sixty directors of doctoral research from forty American, Canadian, and international universities after three days of deliberation at a special three-day seminar conducted just before the 61st annual NCTE convention last November.

Cosponsored by the Committee on Research of the National Council of Teachers of English and the University of Minnesota, the seminar was organized around the consideration of ideas in papers contributed by six consultants: Dwight L. Burton (future directions), Jeremy D. Finn (statistical design), Carol S. Talbert (anthropological models), Gunnar Hansson (foreign models), Harry S. Broudy (imagic association), and Alan C. Kay (interactive computer models). Participants were divided into six working parties to consider such separate research interests as Reading, Literature, Language Development, Composing and Speech, Interdisciplinary Study, and Curriculum and Teacher Education.

As chief among the practices which seem to have inhibited progress in research, participants identified the absence of adequate conceptual models to generate exciting researchable questions; an overemphasis on research involving quantifiable data; a reward system for professional researchers which tends to encourage isolate, fragmented, "grab bag" studies; a lack of concern and expertise in utilizing the insights and methods of related disciplines; and a simplistic tendency to rely on univariate methods of analysis to assess learning under complex educational conditions.

Major recommendations of the seminar, together with the consul-

tant papers, will be published by NCTE in *Research in the Teaching of English*. In addition, videotaped reports of the plenary sessions are expected to be made available through the National Council of Teachers of English for use with doctoral seminars and other groups. A thirty-minute videotape of highlights from the NCTE-University of Minnesota seminar was previewed at the spring Conference on English Education in Baltimore in March, 1973.

Among the insights and recommendations which all researchers in English Education may well ponder are the following observations emerging from the studies of working parties:

1. Major breakthroughs in defining researchable questions have emerged primarily from significant conceptual views (e.g., C. C. Fries, I. A. Richards, Noam Chomsky). Much research in English Education is presently fragmented and preparadigmatic with a compelling need to synthesize basic studies. Such conceptualization is essential if the profession is to avoid fragmented, grab-bag research, especially of the kind currently rampant in research in Reading.

2. Researchers and users of research must distinguish clearly between studies of immediate and nonimmediate application. If a study seeks not to solve an immediate problem, its theoretical foundation must be important, clear, and unambiguous.

3. Progress in research in English Education frequently has overemphasized the importance of quantifiable data. Case studies, interaction analysis, and other approaches can yield significant findings. Research methods must be appropriate to the question being studied and sometimes a less rigorous method will provide information relative to the question. The limitations of experimentation in the school setting are such that multivariate as well as informal methods must always be considered.

4. Developmental psychology has much to contribute to studies of learning in English Education. Whether undertaken through longitudinal studies, through a "snapshot" or "milestone" approach which attempts to describe stages in the child's progress toward adult competence — a developmental approach is essential in understanding the continuous process of learning. But researchers will limit their understanding if they concentrate only on what a child ordinarily does at any age or in any situation if they don't also consider what he "can do" when put to the "test" in specially structured settings.

5. Insights, concepts, methods, and views from such other disciplines as sociology, anthropology, philosophy, statistics, and computer technology can enrich and support studies in English Education. Researchers in English Education cannot be expected to train them-

selves as anthropologists or statisticians; rather they need to develop a sufficient understanding of important related fields to be able to converse with specialists, to know where to seek assistance. For large-scale studies a team approach seems especially beneficial in conducting interdisciplinary research.

6. The insularity of researchers within the field of English Education also tends to restrict advances. Those interested in elementary language arts only infrequently exchange ideas with specialists in secondary-level studies. Directors of research in response to literature are not always conversant with studies in Reading. Few Americans are well acquainted with significant studies underway in England, much less those in the learning of native language and literature in other countries. Piaget's work is generally widely recognized, but equally significant writings by Polanyi and Langer are often ignored. Regular and frequent interchange — through journals, at conferences, through intervisitation — is required to overcome the limitation of insularity.

7. The last decade has seen significant progress in defining linguistic competence (using language as a sentence system), but too little attention to discourse competence — the written and spoken use of language in discourse according to the dictates of occasion, audience, topic, role function, mode, motivation, value system. Studies of the development of discourse competence from childhood to adulthood require major attention from researchers.

These seven concerns, among the many identified by the Minnesota Seminar, will be developed in greater detail by Peter Rosenbaum, the seminar recorder, in preparing the final report. In the meantime, the Council's Committee on Research is already considering ways in which it, as NCTE's major organized group concerned with the improvement of research, can find effective ways to accelerate the thrust toward improvement of research initiated at the Minnesota Seminar. As a first step the Committee is planning a two-day conference for doctoral candidates prior to the Philadelphia NCTE convention this November.

New York State and Certification by Competency

Vincent C. Gazzetta

Vincent C. Gazzetta is Director of the New York State Education Department's Division of Teacher Education and Certification.

The news media during the past few months has been filled with reports about Henry Kissinger's worldwide travels. As you stop to think about the way in which the news has been presented it becomes quite clear that the important and most newsworthy elements centered around "destination and purpose" — the focal points were couched in terms such as: "has gone to ———" "is expected to arrive at" "will confer about" "has been discussing ————".

The fact that Henry flew, walked, or drove was of interest, but only that. The critical elements were his purpose and destination.

The emphasis which the news media has put on purpose and destination in relation to Dr. Kissinger's travels tells us something about what a State certification system should emphasize.

I say that because as I look at the development of New York's certification system, I see that we have, for more than a quarter of a century, emphasized not the purpose or the destination, but the travel arrangements — what means of travel are to be used and what route will be taken. To illustrate what I mean let me use the example of an English teacher. Our identifying landmarks by which we know we have reached our destination is the issuance of a certificate to teach English. The system does not provide for any other identifying factors. What we have placed our emphasis on is the route to be taken, namely 36 semester hours of content, 12 semester hours of professional study, and a field experience. Without a clear definition of destination we have locked in and rigidified the factors which should be flexible and responsive a wide variety of variables.

Before going any further, I want to set the stage so that you understand my bias. I work for the State Education Department; thus, I represent a complex organizational structure which is responsible to the citizens of the State of New York. The actions of the State Education Department, in the area of teacher education and cer-

tification, are to be directed towards providing the best possible assurance that competent people are staffing the schools. My concern centers on the system which my State uses to provide that assurance. My remarks in no way are meant to indicate that the 200,000 plus staff members in New York are incompetent. Instead, they are aimed at suggesting that the present system is unable to identify competency and to sketch the ways the State will seek to change the situation.

The certification system presently in effect in New York is familiar to all of you, for every State uses essentially the same system, and it was appropriate for its day. But the evolutionary process continues to operate and major changes in the systems are beginning to appear nationwide.

For years in New York competency has been described as the appropriate mixture of courses and/or credits, and in addition, the appropriate mix has been mandated by the State. To me, it means that we have been placing our hopes and aspirations on the means and routes of travel and not on the destination. Yet the vital element is not how we travel, but whether the destination is reached. It is toward the objective of assuring that the destination has been reached that the State system must move.

At the last count, 30 of the 50 states were in various stages of grappling with the problem and 15 of the 30 were actively in an operating stage of some sort. There are a variety of approaches being used by the states, and I would like to describe the approach that New York is taking.

The history of certification in New York documents quite clearly that the purpose of certification of public school staff members is to ensure competence, but I cannot find a clear, public statement of policy to that effect prior to October 27, 1972, when the Board of Regents, which is the governing body for all educational endeavors in New York, has approved the following statement of policy:

"The Regents goal for the preparation and practice of professional personnel in the schools is:

> To establish a system of certification by which the State can assure the public that professional personnel in the schools possess and maintain demonstrated competence to enable children to learn."

Let me add here that this is not an immediately attainable goal. It represents the destination. The essence of our mode of reaching the destination is that the system will be one that is competency-based and field-centered.

The movement in this direction will cover three specific thrusts: first, the accreditation of preparatory programs; second, certification practice and policy; and third, the development of a system of continued education. A tentative timetable has been developed, but progress will dictate the actual timetable.

The first activity is to occur in the area of the accreditation of preparatory programs. In New York no college or university may offer a program of preparation without official Department sanction. This is true for all programs, not just preparatory programs leading to certification.

Our Division has the responsibility of accrediting all programs leading to certification. We have used the traditional accreditation procedures of gathering data on factors such as: the training and experience of faculty, the specific components of the curriculum, the physical facilities, the supporting resources, and the admission and grading practices. As we analyze those procedures two important facts stand out like heavily bandaged thumbs. First, the data on which decisions are made are related only to the complex mixture of variables which aided a person to reach the destination. Second, the destination was described as achieving the certificate. Yet the certification requirements are based on curriculum elements. A vicious cycle.

The Department must assume part of the blame for the second item. The Department's power is awesome and I am afraid we have been guilty of nit-picking so that freedom of movement has, in some instances, been perceived as impossible.

We hope to overcome the problems and to encourage the most open system possible. To do that we are saying that any new program or any program due for re-accreditation after September 1, 1973 will not be approved unless it is "competency-based and field-centerd."

A competency-based and field-centered program is to have the following characteristics.

1. It will be based on explicit and publicly stated competencies. Those skills, knowledge, and attitudes which graduates will be required to demonstrate.

2. It will have assessment procedures which have explicit and publicly stated conditions of performance and levels of mastery.

3. It will be able to provide evidence that program graduates have attained the required competencies.

4. It will have not only performance standards for the various program components, but will also have a standard for the program as a whole.

5. It will have a strong research and corrective action plan to enable the appropriateness of competencies to be validated and also to enable modification of competencies or assessment procedures to take place where necessary.

Not necessarily one of the characteristics of a competency-based and field-centered system, but vital to the success of any program is that we will ask for significant and intimate involvement of representation from the schools and the schools' professional staff in collaboration with the higher institution in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of the program.

There are some other characteristics which relate to the travel arrangements, but the five mentioned above which relate to the destination and evidence that the destination has been reached are the most important ones.

Some of the basic questions that need to be asked are very difficult, for example:

1. What in priority order on the basis of importance are the roles and responsibilities of the person serving in the certification area?

2. What and how many of those roles and responsibilities can a preparatory program deal with and/or be accountable for?

3. What are the component competencies of those roles and responsibilities?

4. How will we know that those competencies have been attained and are appropriate?

5. How will we know that the roles and responsibilities can be met?

In essence the questions deal with the issue of what can be expected in terms of a program candidate's knowledge, his or her capability to enable learning to occur, and his or her sensitivity to children's needs and learning styles.

To many it sounds as if we are expecting perfection by September 2, 1973. Actually, we will be looking for programs to be developed to the best of the developers' ability, for that will establish a point

from which growth and maturation can take place.

While objectivity of assessment is most important, it must be realized that total objectivity is impossible to achieve, at least for the present. I personally have no real quarrel with subjective assessment as long as two conditions are met. First, that the assessment criteria are as explicit as possible and public. Secondly, that the assessment is made by more than one person.

I would like to make one other point before leaving this particular activity. We are not considering limiting the concept of a competency based system to just the professional education sequence. It should pervade the entire program; general education, subject matter specialization, as well as the professional study.

Our timetable indicates that all preparatory programs will be competency-based and field-centered by the end of 1980. This may be an optimistic hope as there presently are 1,961 programs housed in about 110 institutions in the State. I hope it is not overly optimistic.

Whenever all programs are competency-based and field-centered, three major changes in certification policy and procedure are anticipated.

First, the Division of Teacher Education and Certification will cease to do evaluations of individual credentials. At the moment we do more than 110,000 evaluations each year. However, there is no way that we can continue to do individual evaluations and be true to the concept of competency. Each preparatory program should have the capability of putting individuals, seeking certification, through an assessment procedure and either recommend the candidate for certification or prescribe for him or her.

Second, New York State has had a fifth year requirement for permanent certification for many years. Basically, within five years, the holder of a provisional certificate must either complete an approved masters degree or 30 semester hours of graduate study. Upon completion, a permanent certificate good for the life of the holder, is issued.

To get back to the Plan. We are proposing that the regulations governing the issuance of permanent certificates be repealed, thus leaving only a single certificate in New York.

Third, in place of the permanent certificate and its requirements, we are proposing that a periodic assessment system be instituted for newly certified personnel. I cannot describe the periodic assessment system as it has yet to be designed. Its design will entail a great deal

of study and involvement. There are several models which could be followed. For example, here in our host State of Minnesota there is, in essence, a periodic assessment system. Its base is local committee determination under State guidelines. Arizona is moving in a similar direction.

While I cannot describe the exact system since it is yet to be developed, I do know that it must meet the three very basic and essential criteria:

1. It must be what I call a "positive system". A system that is designed to aid persons to maintain and in fact enhance their capabilities. It must not be a system which, in a single blow, determines the existence or non-existence of a staff member's livelihood.

2. It must be linked to the individual's own immediate job responsibility. Periodic assessment based on Statewide normative criteria is not the appropriate method.

3. The system must operate on the basis of explicit and public criteria for both competencies and assessment.

The third major category of activity is in the area of continued education. We believe that a more solid commitment must be made to providing appropriate opportunities for continued education for professional staff. To accomplish this we are working in two ways. First, we intend to test the feasibility of covering the State with a series of regional management units called Career Development Centers. These units are not new institutions, but are seen as a means by which the resources of a region can be cataloged and marshalled to meet the expressed needs of school staffs. The governance of these centers are also envisioned as being collaborative approaches and would include at least the representation from higher institutions, area schools, and the staffs of area schools. The centers must, if they are to be effective, be totally responsive to school needs.

The second effort is to begin to collect the data necessary which would convince the State's Executive Office and Legislature of the need for positive legislative action to assign funds for staff development.

In this category we hope to have legislation enacted by 1977 and the Career Development Centers operational by 1980.

To write about the needed action and to talk about it is an easy task; however, no one can either downgrade or deny the difficulties and problems that are ahead of us. The problems of time, involvement,

financial needs, and the development of explicit competencies and assessment capabilities are all big ones.

On the other hand, the person preparing to serve in the public schools and the citizens of New York are both entitled to every possible assurance that persons being certified have demonstrated competence in their area of certification.

MONOGRAPH NUMBER THIRTEEN

English Teaching in New York State Public Schools*

By

Roger L. Cayer, N.Y.U.

John E. Reedy, S.U.C., Buffalo

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English Without Walls

By Bruce R. Crawford

Bruce R. Crawford presently teaches English at Little Falls High School. He has served as that school's department chairman and led the curriculum changes which took place there.

What an easy life the typical incoming high school freshman has in preparing his four-year plan of English studies. He can be secure in the knowledge that a continuous program of English 9, 10, 11, and 12 (whatever that means) will be ahead of him. However, at Little Falls, New York, the high school student has had this "security blanket" stripped from around him by a new program of "core electives" in English. As if this change were not challenging enough for the student, he also discovers that the Little Falls High School, opened in 1970, is a new "open-space" design. Here he finds himself guided by a flexible, modular schedule through a school life devoid of walled-in classrooms and walled-in feelings. The educators at Little Falls are attempting to make such educational terms as "humanistic", "individualized", and "flexible" more than mere jargon. A look at the English program at Little Falls gives one an opportunity to view one possible avenue of inexpensive innovation in English.

The city of Little Falls, while perhaps not a typical small city, certainly shares the hopes and fears with hundreds of small cities. Unfortunately, it also shares the same economic problems so common today in education. We have all seen computer-based programs in English assisted by para-professionals and teams of professional teachers. However, the simple economics of Little Falls precludes a major increase in educational funding. Our problem was how to move an English program from one which was simply English 9, 10, 11, 12, and "Practical English" (I suppose that meant that the others were impractical!) to a program which would embody the feeling of flexibility suggested by the "open-space" concept of the new building and a program which would begin to meet the needs of all our students. Too many schools are organized so that English consists of a four-year sequence of "Survey of Literature", "World Literature", "American Literature" and "English Literature"; each course meeting five days a week for forty minutes a class. Under such an arrangement many classes are directed either at the most intelligent student, at the expense of the remainder, or at the mythical "average" student, at the expense of all. Most of us remember this

system, since it is under this that we were taught.

Certainly, the traditional system has had its successes, but it too has produced its failures. I'm afraid that forcing all students to study Shakespeare's plays or reading Sidney's Sonnet Sequence has merely insured the undying conviction in most students' minds that they don't like "English". We often justified such teaching by saying "This is good for you" (much like asking a child to take castor oil whether he needs it or not). On the other hand, for some students the reading of such literature can be a rewarding experience, and to deny them the right to study difficult literature would be equally unjustified.

In searching for a solution to this problem, the English staff at Little Falls High School studied the APEX program at Trenton, Michigan, and read of the program at Orono High School in Maine. While we felt that the total adoption of these programs would not have been successful at Little Falls, we knew that the concept of elective English fit the design of the "open-space" high school. Our solution was to design the "Core-Elective Program" currently in operation in the high school.

The daily schedule of classes at Little Falls calls for twenty modules each lasting twenty minutes. Each spring, staff members are asked to structure the time schedule for their own classes. The flexibility of the schedule lies in the flexibility of the administration to allow a variety of time structures. For example, a major aspect of the English program is that most classes meet three times a week for forty minutes a meeting. This departure from the traditional five-days-a-week has enabled the English staff to create many more courses and has enabled the student to increase his course load beyond the normal five subjects per year. All English courses last for one semester twenty weeks. This has made possible a wider range of courses and has offered the student who was unable to take a course the first semester the opportunity to enroll in that course in the second semester. The third structural change in our school day was the elimination of all non-teaching duties such as study-hall supervision. These three changes combined with enormous enthusiasm by the staff have enabled six English teachers to offer forty English courses to seven hundred students.

While all of the courses are "elective" in that any student can take them, the student must be certain that during his four years of study (an expression soon to be abandoned as more students graduate in three or five years) at least four of his twenty-week courses satisfy the "core" requirements in English. These requirements are designed to insure coverage of basics within the elective program. What happens, for example, if "good" students start taking English courses not designed for their needs? The staff at Little Falls does

not feel that students living in a world of pressure for grades should be given complete freedom of choice. Since the staff believes that the success of the elective program hinges upon their ability to circumvent this problem, they also assist the student in scheduling his courses. This assistance, while usually merely offering information, occasionally becomes more "directive". We do not want college-bound students selecting four courses in T. V. Production merely to insure a higher grade-point average. So far, the combination of the "core program" and the staff's aid in course selection has eliminated a potential hazard in electives. While any school can declare any subject matter a "core requirement", at Little Falls the "cores" grew out of the terminology of the old program. Most of the English teachers felt that the structure of World Literature, American Literature, and English Literature had merit; so they designated these as three core areas. Within each area a number of courses exist, each one stressing the basic skills of English but oriented toward a specific body of literature. Also, each core area contains courses of different levels of difficulty, or "phases". This system differs from the old "tracking" in that the students have the final choice of courses. However, we have found that students do tend to group themselves by common interests, thereby giving classes some common element.

The best way of explaining the structure is by examining the courses in the American Literature "core". These course titles are The Eden Scene: Readings in American Literature; Current American Essays; Gumshoes and Gunfighters; The American Short Story; The American View of Alienation; and Modern Drama in America. These six courses range in difficulty from the academic "Eden Scene" to the lower-phased "Gumshoes and Gunfighters". We have also attempted to include courses such as "The American View of Alienation" which is a multi-level course. Within the framework of these core courses, we hope that each student can select a course which is interesting, yet one which stresses the basic skills of English.

About the only students who do not have such a choice are the ninth-graders. They are required to take one course in Composition Laboratory where teachers with under fifteen students per class work with each student on needed composition skills. The second required course stresses the basic reading skills necessary throughout high school. The only two options available to these students are that they can elect additional courses, or by demonstrating to the instructor that they do not need the work covered in the required courses, they can be excused from the course to work on independent study in English.

As long as the student meets these core requirements, the remainder of his selections are totally free. While by no means a complete list, the following list of course offerings demonstrates the variety

of interest and difficulty levels available at Little Falls: The Epic; Upstate in Literature; Developmental Reading; Historical Fiction; Contemporary Satire; Adolescence and Identity; Multi-Media; Legends and Folktales; Public Speaking; Creative Writing; Television Production Techniques. One immediate effect of this type of English program has been a growing number of students taking English because they want to, not because they must. For the 1971-72 school year, the "average" student at Little Falls took three English courses even though only two were required.

While the program at Little Falls is still too new to be evaluated objectively (as if we can really evaluate even a traditional program's effectiveness), there are some results which have become apparent. The initial premise that offering a wide range of English electives would increase the students' interest in English has been supported by the subsequent increase in enrollment in English. The fear that reducing the number of weekly meetings from five to three would cause a reduction in learning basic skills has, so far, proven completely baseless. Another benefit from the core-elective program is that the English teaching staff is able to create courses which utilize the strengths of all staff members. The assumption (seemingly followed in traditional systems), that any English teacher can fit into a position much like one can interchange parts in a machine is not only dehumanizing but illogical. At Little Falls, teachers are able to exploit their strengths. The obvious winners in this stuation are the students who are taking courses taught by experts in that field.

However, having each staff member design courses to utilize his background creates one problem which makes "teacher turn-over" more of a problem. Once a program of studies in English has been established, usually by February, any change in staffing creates difficulties. The school's administration must appoint an English teacher with strengths very similar to those of the person he is replacing. Even this problem offers some reward to the students taking English in such a program; with each new staff member comes a potential source of new courses.

Based on our limited experience with the core-elective program, we feel that the benefits far outweigh the additional work and worry connected with the program. As long as the program offers courses for a wide range of interests and abilities and covers all the material and basic skills needed for success after high school, the core-elective program at Little Falls should continue to make "English" a subject selected by choice, not one merely endured for four years. While the English curriculum at Little Falls is far from perfect and will continue to change, the current program, combined with the "open-space" school, has resulted in a high school where any student can be treated as an individual; the walls that have plagued education have been lowered in Little Falls.

"What Do I Do After I Say Good Morning?"

Retraining to Teach English Mini Courses

Robert A. Leonard

Robert A. Leonard, Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District No. 3's district chairman of English, is consultant for Individualized Instruction in secondary English classrooms in Nassau County. He is a member of the executive committee for NYSEC's English chairmen.

A grimace ripples across the face of the sixteen-year-old boy in reaction to his teacher's direction and grows larger as the teacher repeats:

"Go ahead. Plunge your arms to the elbow into this tub of ice and water. Then keep your arms under the water for as long as you can stand it."

"Geez, Mr. Stevens, this is freezin!"

This conversation describes a fragment of an experiential lesson involving Jack London's "To Build a Fire", a short story offered as empirical evidence supporting the theme of the mini course, *The Bitter Game of Survival.* Arranged thematically, many short pieces are combined with long works into a ten-week segment called a mini course.

The "discrepant event" which Piaget considers necessary before change occurs is a daily reality in the English classrooms of the three senior high schools in our school district where more than 90 mini courses are being offered to juniors and seniors on a non-graded basis.

Once upon a time in those not too distant days of yore, we, English teachers, firmly implanted in the center-front of our classrooms, leisurely learned our new students' names and personality differences from tried-and-true techniques such as class discussion, "summer vacation" compositions, and seating charts. If we accept the exigencies which brought about mini courses, we must then accept the necessity to retrain ourselves so that the courses we teach are not the only things which change.

Mr. Stevens, the teacher who is mentioned earlier, designed his

lesson to allow his students to experience the "50 degrees below zero" cold which London suggests in his story. He plans for that cold to assault their own bodies.

"There's no apathy in a classroom where kids are plunging their arms into icy tubs," Stevens would point out. "Anyway, how can a *discussion* of below freezing temperature let kids feel it?"

Teaching mini courses requires more than a philosophy, more than a knowledge of instructional process, and more than a means by which both the teacher and the student become dependent upon and accountable to each other and themselves.

Because mini courses provide for options, interests, and multiple groupings, teachers report that the youngsters who arrive in their classrooms generally are animated because they elect that particular course and are involved in their own educational objectives. Built-in motivation is astonishing to most of us, of course.

But, if self-fulfillment is to be achieved for each youngster, new designs and new teacher acceptances are imperative. Two major distinctions become evident as teachers retrain for mini courses:

First: When teachers offer their students lessons which provide for various perceptual learning styles, marked improvement in multi-school or self-selected tasks is apparent and

Second: When teachers design experiential lessons with interactive options, they help their youngsters delight in the single, central focus of the mini theme.

Such an approach was spearheaded as early as 1935 by the NCTE publication, *An Experience Curriculum in English.* That report proposed that most in-school experiences were artificial when contrasted with the daily life experience of students. "The first step in constructing (the ideal curriculum) is to survey life, noting what experiences most people have and what desirable possible experiences they miss."

Preparing experiential impact for mini course reaction builds on that original thesis. The classroom teacher has the advantage to observe the way his youngsters behave. The evidence is part of the curriculum not a corollary to it.

Experiential lessons will stimulate youngsters to develop concepts, acquire factual information and examine and refine value structures as a result of their involvement. During an affective experience, the student will be confronted by the teacher with challenges, problems, and issues which can be solved with the unique resourses at hand.

At every turn the learner should be goaded and guided to intellectualize and to reflect on what is taking place, what he does, what he sees, and what he feels. Such accountability is mandatory and justifiable.

At the time John Dewey led the functional psychologists and devoted himself to the close interactive relationship between man and his environment — man literally is a function of his environment, and, as he responds to it and seeks to shape it to his own needs and ends, the environment becomes the function of man, — there were suspicions about the academic validity of such programs. Organized situations which placed heavy emphasis on the value of "living and doing" instead of, or in addition to, the more traditionally structured classroom activity, were clearly vulnerable to attack.

Simply stated, the practitioners did woefully little to help students to realize the full potential for learning which could accompany the experiences. It occurred to few people that intellectual and experiential activities logically and naturally ought to be part of the same individual's education.

Dewey himself was emphatic in stating that, while experience is primarily an affair of doing, and while the sensations derived are the stimuli to interaction with the environment, such sensations are not knowledge, but they can lead to knowledge. It was the failure of Dewey's followers to make the all important connections between experience and knowledge that led the Progressive Education movement to the erroneous practice of activity for activity's sake.

As mini courses emerge with greater frequency across New York State and indeed across the nation, English teachers are being given a second chance for competence in teaching and learning. English teachers have the opportunity to change their image with creative, meaningful, affective, experiential designs rather than by stilted, dehumanizing, disruptive patterns.

We are being offered this opportunity again but now we have the full knowledge that the youngsters we teach in the 70's are products of the following estrangement of values:

First, the youngsters we teach became alienated from a sense of history as well as a sense of destiny. The consequences appear to be that youngsters no longer accept the values of hard work, patience, tolerance or of frustration for a future reward.

Education which includes the affective involves experiencing the immediacy of one's emotions now, — not just talking about one's feelings yesterday or about what one might encounter tomorrow.

Second, there is an estrangement from traditional forms of authority. No longer do role, status, age, wealth and sex convey authority to increasing numbers of young people. Each single experience is judged on its own merits. The youngster of today regards life as a procession of events; each single impression is enjoyed for its own sake.

The mini course movement with its short thrusts in time, its thematic arrangement, its multiple-teacher approach is a reaction to the deep currents of student dissatisfaction with, and alienation from, the English education they have been receiving. When the teacher chooses to style his plans to include experiential involvement and student interaction, he demonstrates an understanding of the educational process as it has evolved from the functionalists and proves that he is a professional able to cope with the 1970's. These are today's most needed catalysts for humanizing English studies. By including affective interaction, we create more powerful ways to nurture and integrate a youngster's feelings and values with his intellectual development.

To create impact through experiential stimuli, mini course teachers most often utilize role playing and simulation games.[1] Because teachers had not always felt Piaget's "discrepant event" before the rise of mini courses, they have traditionally failed to envision the possibilities for experiential learning in the English program.

Teachers who plan experiential lessons will accept that all children learn differently, each in his own way. These teachers recognize that some children learn best by seeing, others by listening, and still others by touching and feeling.

Planning for activities in which there is interaction allows for individual participation within a group situation. Such activities make use of the above learning styles as a daily reality and offer means to accomplish learning. The process is an evolution from teacher-dominated instruction to child-centered environment, and beyond that, to finally inserting, building-in, planning for the experience activity in an interactive manner so that learning is positive and measurable to the student as well as to the teacher. Whenever we, or the youngsters we instruct, teach, exhibit, demonstrate, or explain any experience, we or they also learn the information taught, exhibited, demonstrated, or explained. This activity structure also permits the youngster to determine whether he will work alone, in pairs, or in small groups.

Experiential education obliges youngsters to leave their seats. Sometimes such activities permit them to leave their rooms and even to leave the school building when necessary. Current research indicates that teachers who keep youngsters in sterile classroom postures serve

to create discipline problems. Teachers, themselves, will admit, if they are honest, that they could not sit quietly at their own desk for six hours. Still fewer could survive a joyless, sedentary environment where only cognitive problem solving is offered.

Each mini course offers multiple optional experience objectives. Column one is the activity and column two is the 1970's bridge from the experience to the knowledge. Dewey began the journey; we now have the chance to complete it successfully.

One example for the mini course *The Future of Education* might suggest that the student:

Visit a neighboring school district to observe educational innovations. Interview students, teachers, and the principal, whenever possible.	Report your findings to the entire class or to a small group of students or to a group of parents or other teachers.

For the mini course *Reflections of Myself:*

Write twenty sentences beginning with "I believe" and be as truthful about yourself as possible. Develop one of your sentences into a paragraph and another of your sentences into a complete essay.	Permit one or two others to read your work and ask them to write and initial their comments on a separate page.

Another example for the same course might be:

Write a folk song entitled "Reflections of Myself" with at least four verses. Each verse should be satirical and highlight a fragment of your personality. If you prefer, each verse may instead be evolutionary from birth to your present age.	Perform your song in person or on tape for the entire class or for a group of your teachers and guidance counselor.

One more could be:

Create a "Reflections of Myself" poster including twenty things which express you symbolically, e.g. soft as *cotton,* hard as *nails,* sharp as a *tack.*	Display the poster in your classroom and with the teacher's help, ask five classmates to identify the artist from the materials and similes you've exhibited.

For the mini course mentioned at the beginning, *The Bitter Game of Survival,* the youngster could:

Interview a policeman or a Viet Nam veteran or a lonely senior citizen in a local old folks' home on the daily struggle of staying alive.	Tape the interiew and write a piece for the local newspaper or take a position and write on society's attitude toward individual survival.

Offering mini courses causes even the most experienced teachers to need to know how to accelerate, highlight, and focus the learning and teaching process. Several means to do this have been suggested: role playing, simulation games, experiential techniques, acceptance of various learning styles, community involvement, and especially small group interaction to insure learning. Those who have already adopted mini courses as their direction or those who contemplate the change are asked to evaluate their programs in terms of their experiential patterns. Can educators hope to train youngsters to cope with an ever increasing onslaught of new information? Is the new role of the teacher to assist students to apply their learning to an unknown future?

It is becoming more and more apparent that the teacher must retrain to move his students from an introspective sphere of knowledge and experience to an affective level of thought, expression, and production. If you can help him to achieve this, he will become a producer of knowledge as compared to his more familiar role of consumer of knowledge and will learn to function as a member of the salient seventies.

1. NOTE: A complete listing of available games may be found in *The Learning Directory* 1972-73 (New York: Westinghouse Learning Corporation, 1972)

New English: from Theory to Practice

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In the January, 1972 issue of *College English*, two articles reassert both the absurdity and the immorality involved in language teaching in the schools and colleges /Wayne O'Neill, "The Politics of Bidialectalism," pp. 433-438. James Sledd, "Doublespeak: Dialectology in the Service of Big Brother," pp. 439-456/. Of course, much of what is said in these two articles has been said before in different ways by men like Roger Shuy, William Labov, Kenneth Goodman, etc. In fact, it is probably safe to say that most teachers have had an opportunity to find out through our many conferences and professional journals that the Bonny and Clyde approach to eradicating linguistic features indicates, at the very least, a misinformed teacher, and all too often, it indicates a reacistic elitism devoted to putting minorities "in their place"; and that the "pragmatic" approach involving bi-dialectism (and it may follow, eradication) "invites" students to adopt the values of the white middle-class society so that they, too, can have lots of cars, televisions, and an occasional war to protect these values. Unfortunately, only a minority in the profession teach and write as though they are aware of what has been discovered about language and language teaching: too many English teachers, because of their own ignorance or because of some misguided, aristocratic, missionary zeal believe that it is their job *to protect* our language and literature from the people who speak the language and who are the literature.

But it is not my purpose to restate what James Sledd said so clearly in December, 1969 /James Sledd, "Bi-Dialectalism: The Linguistics of White Supremacy," *English Journal* 58. 1307-1315, 1329/. Rather, it is my purpose, here to point out some of the cultural elitism and misinformation which have shaped the teaching of writing and literature and to suggest some changes teachers might make in their present practices.

The Predicament

It doesn't take too many visits to high school English classes before the observer discovers that the findings of the Dartmouth Conference

have been filed away in the libraries and that the "innovative" uses of media, which are beginning to edge their way into the classrooms (though god knows we have fought it), are being subjected to the same limited points of view which have traditionally bound the study of literature to literary history and formulaic criticism. But before we can suggest specific changes, we must first decide why students might want or need to be in our English classes, and second, what kinds of activities we should provide for students who wish to study language, literature, and media.

Unfortunately, the first question is much easier to answer and document when it is stated negatively: what are the reasons students do not want to be in our classrooms? Charles Silberman points out that the high school English curriculum remains much as it always was; that "three-quarters of the high schools in the United States still require" *Silas Marner,* that in the study of literature, "the emphasis usually is on memorizing 'facts' "; and that, "when writing *is* taught, the emphasis, is almost wholly on mechanics — spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, width of the margins, and so on — with little attention to development, organization, or style, i.e., to anything larger than a sentence." /Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in the Classroom* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1970), pp. 175-177./ In the films *High School* and *No Reason to Stay,* we see students trying to function in essentially oppressive situations in which they are subjected to indignity and irrelevancy. And the list can easily be expanded with examples from books like *The Student As Nigger* by Jerry Farber /Hollywood: Contact Books, 1969/, *How Old Will You Be In 1984?* edited by Diane Divoky/New York: Avon, 1969/, or *The High School Revolutionaries* edited by Marc Libarle and Tom Seligson /New York: Vintage Books, 1970/. The point, here, is that the list is all too easily expanded. We have not been spending enough time and effort documenting or clarifying what should go on in our classrooms.

Instead we argue incessantly about how to write behavioral objectives so that they will comply with all the semantic gameplaying suggested by Robert F. Mager in *Preparing Instructional Objectives.* And when we ask about particular objectives, some understanding voice always replies, "I'm not in English. I'm just trying to help you write these objectives. *What* you teach is entirely up to you. Now let's try it again: you tell me what you want to teach and I'll translate it into a properly stated series of objectives."

Of course, a lot usually gets lost in the translation for the simple reason that the teacher and the behaviorist are, in fact, speaking different languages. But the process of buck-passing has begun, and without examining any of the initial assumptions made by behavioral psychologists about the nature of man, we write behavioral objectives. We do not ask *why* we teach grammar or *why* students should concen-

trate on expository rather than personal essays. Rather, we ring our bells at strange intervals, and we call it modular scheduling; we offer more "relevant" courses, but lecturing continues to dominate.

In short, we tinker. And it is not that our tinkering is bad — quite the contrary: modular scheduling can be a great help, and students should have the opportunity to participate in courses which have some bearing on their own lives. But many of the changes we are presently making direct themselves at little more than externals and superficialities — tinkering. And while we tinker, some of our students turn to drugs, some to violence, and a few even attempt to fight the inanity. What is even more worrisome, however, is that vast majority of students who *simply sit there,* lost in daydreams or nightmares, blindly following the rules, somewhat concerned about grades. They don't bother us — we don't bother them. And all the behavioral objectives we can write, and all the bells we do or do not ring will not change the horrifying sense of death and boredom which pervades our schools. The following discussion of learning theory and classroom practices suggests ways and reasons for moving beyond the tinkering.

The Learning Process

The learning process begins when an individual perceives (hears, sees, feels, thinks, smells, tastes) something. He may use language first to explain this new perception to himself, and second, to explain his perception to another individual who has perceived something similar. Because their perceptions have been slightly different, they interact in an attempt to come to some common understanding. Using language as best they can, they discuss their perceptions, come as close to agreement as possible, and categorize the perception in terms of their past experiences. The process may end here for the moment, or the process of categorizing may lead to new conclusions and new perceptions. At a more sophisticated level, the dialogue and interaction may be entirely interior — that is, an individual may 'talk to himself' by comparing one perception with another to see how they match up logically.

If this is applied to the teacher and the classroom situations, it means that teachers must pay more heed to individual differences; they must allow students to make mistakes; and they must encourage them to discuss their perceptions before they act in terms of them. In short, the classroom must open up and become human — to do less is to miseducate.

Unfortunately, many teachers think of teaching and learning as separate processes, and it is this kind of misconception which allows them to become immersed in their subjects, motivated to teach their

subject for *its* own sake, as though it had a purpose and a life totally independent of the teacher and the learner. Such a system teaches students that passivity is good, that memory is golden, that authority prescribes truth, that questions always have answers, and that English differs from history, which differs from music, which differs from art. Such a system does not respect the individual's emotions, "the subjective happenings inside oneself," because it does not have time for the student. /Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1966), pp. 20-21, 42./

Such a system rejects the natural curiosity and motivation of the learner, a curiosity and motivation so clearly stated in Whitman's "Beginning My Studies":

> Beginning my studies the first step pleas'd me so much,
> The mere fact consciousness, these forms, the power of motion,
> The least insect or animal, the senses, eyesight, love
> The first step I say awed me and pleas'd me so much,
> I have hardly gone and hardly wish'd to go any farther,
> But stop and loiter all the time to sing it in ecstatic songs.

And it also rejects the advice Whitman gives the student in "To a Pupil":

> Go, dear friend, if need be give up all else, and commence today to inure yourself to pluck, reality, self-esteem, definiteness, elevatedness,
> Rest not till you rivet and publish yourself of your own Personality.

Quite the contrary, then, from the present system of education, these lines from Whitman suggest that students should have time to explore and experience and discover; they should have time to stop and loiter; and if they have a song, they should be given a chance to sing it. Education must allow the learner to discover his self, and as Whitman says, to publish that self once it is discovered. The subject matter of education is human experience, and the purpose of education is to promote a better understanding of man's experience in an attempt to facilitate mental health and intellectual growth. The ultimate goal of education must be to produce the fully-functioning person.

This new view of education sees learning as a process involving the student in a constant state of becoming. It sees knowledge as the product of experience. It recognizes that it must deal with the

"insistent present" because the present includes the past and looks forward to the future, and it accepts and promotes the belief that ideas are important to the individual "here and now in the circumstances of his actual life." /Alfred North Whitehead, "The Aims of Education," in *The Aims of Education and Other Essays* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), p. 3./ It focuses on man's natural propensity for conversation, curiosity, construction, and expression.

The subject matter of education, then, is life, and its purpose is to promote the mental health and growth of the individual. Ideally, the goal of education is to produce the fully-functioning person: a person who relates to and accepts other people; a person who realizes his interdependence on others; a person who views life as a process of becoming, accepting and expecting change. The fully-functioning (or self-actualizing) person expects to make mistakes, but he profits from them. His values coincide with the common welfare, and he lives consistently in terms of them; "he has no need for subterfuge or deceit, because he is motivated by the value of facilitating self and others." And because he sees life as "discovery and adventure," he sees himself in a creative role, interacting with and discovering his world. /Earl C. Kelley, "The Fully-Functioning Self," in *Perceiving Behaving Becoming* (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1962), pp. 18-20./ Finally, then, it is the job of education to provide experiences that facilitate and enhance the individual's process of becoming because, "A truly healthy person is not something fixed and completed. He is a person whose process and activities go on in such a way that he will continue to be healthy." /John Dewey, *John Dewey on Education, Selected Writings,* ed. Reginald D. Archambault (New York: Modern Library, 1964), p.4/.

Authoritarian methods of teaching interfere with the learning process because they do not allow the student to participate in directing his own learning experience. They too often meet only the needs of the teacher and assume that experiences which further the growth of one individual are necessarily good for other individuals. Moreover, they totally ignore the fact that an individual will not learn anything unless he wishes to do so.

This all adds up to a fairly obvious point: the authoritarian method must be replaced by a much greater degree of student-centeredness, not as an ideal, but as a necessity. People learn to crawl, stand, walk, and run because they want to — the acts fulfill personal needs. They learn the complicated process of speech by the age of five because they want to communicate. They love to explore and question and discover because it is exciting and fun. The student-centered courses not only take all this into account, they depend on these natural inclinations.

In summary, student-centered courses focus on the needs and capabilities of individual students. They differ from the child-centered courses of the progressive education movement because they do not seek to fit the student into society; rather, they seek only to facilitate the growth and learning of fully functioning individuals who will make their own decisions about society and their place in it.

Student centeredness demands that students be involved in the shaping of curricula — that they, in fact, are the center around which teachers and subject matter must revolve. It demands that students assist in organizing educational experiences and that education actively deal with the problems of the individual student. It demands that skills be emphasized only insofar as they aid in the completion of an act worth completing, not as ends in themselves. And it demands that students be allowed to make mistakes and not be penalized, but, instead, encouraged to try again and learn from the error. Finally, and probably most importantly, student centeredness demands that teachers reject the notion that certain kinds of information or particular facts have some inherent value in and of themselves, and face the fact that a steady "diet of predigested materials" causes only indigestion for the organism unprepared for the meal. /John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1956), p. 46./

From Theory to Practice

What does all this mean to the average teacher of high school English — not that mythical teacher who is loved and supported by his colleagues and administrators, not that affluent teacher who has video-tape machinery available in his classroom, but that teacher whose existence is defined by "Basic English" or "English III-Chaucer to Eliot"? First and foremost, it means that this teacher should think about the implications of the following ten statements:

1. the student (every student and all students) comes *before* Chaucer, Eliot, grammar, and skills;

2. the learning *process* takes precedence over *things produced*;

3. errors and mistakes are absolutely necessary to the learning process, particularly when it comes to speaking, reading, and writing;

4. any given dialet *is* as good as another, and it is discriminatory and immoral to teach or act otherwise;

5. there is no one book that all people should read (not even *Silas Marner* or *Tale of Two Cities*);

6. it is not *better* to read a book than it is to see/read/a movie;

7. the responses "I liked it" or "I didn't like it" can not and should not always be explained, especially when they come a short time after the student has had the literary experience;

8. traditional forms of literary criticism represent only one method of dealing with literature, and they are neither better nor worse than other ways of dealing with and responding to literature;

9. *composition* means more than a written essay; and

10. exploring, composing, and responding to literature through language and other media are the major activities of the English class.

Second, the student-centered teacher must face the complex problem of how to begin. How does a teacher acquire the students' trust and find out what areas of themselves and their environment they actually want to study and explore? Of course, there is no formula for establishing an atmosphere of trust and security, but a good beginning might be to think of students the same way we think of other human beings and allow them the same dignity and respect we give to and expect from others. Beyond that, each teacher must find his own honest, comfortable way of relating to his students.

There are probably many ways of finding out the students' needs, desires, and interests, and for the teacher blessed with students who have not already been intimidated by the system, the simplest way is to ask them. But assuming that many high school students have learned to keep their mouths shut in school, the teacher might wish to try improvisations or role-playing activities. For example, the teacher might split the class into small groups of 3-5 students, give them a list of possible improvisatory situations and roles, and allow them adequate time to prepare their scenarios. This list handed out by the teacher might contain some of the following suggestions:

1. Characters — father, mother, son.
   Conflict — son refuses to be drafted, father feels this is unpatriotic.

2. Characters — father, mother, teen-age son and daughter.
   Conflict — the son, who is younger, gets to stay out later than his sister because he is a "boy."
   Conflict — parents want their daughter to stop dating her boyfriend because he is "no good."

Conflict — son wants to quit high school at sixteen because he's bored and doesn't like to study academic subjects.
Conflict — daughter brings home her date and he happens to be of a different race than she.

Of course, the list would be greatly expanded, and hopefully, the students would create their own characters and situations. Now, depending on the students' interest and the time allotted, these improvisations can be as complex and rehearsed as the students wish.

The activities which might follow these improvisations are almost infinite in number and purpose. The students might write personal essays about their reactions to the improvisations. They might write about the different roles they play in the course of a day. They might actually try to write up a script, make costumes, tape record background music, and perform a skit. They might interview other members of the class to find out their reactions to the improvisations and present the findings in the form of a newspaper poll. They might film one of the improvisations and tape-record the dialogue. They might search out books, records, films, poems, photographs, television shows, etc., which they feel have direct or indirect bearing on any of the conflicts or issues presented in the improvisations. In fact, the possibilities are limited only by the imaginations of those involved.

After each group performs its scenario, the students can discuss the theme, conflict, actions, stereotyping, etc., as these relate to the improvisations. During this discussion the teacher helps the students investigate and articulate their own experiences and ideas as they relate to the issues and people presented in the improvisations. Beginning activities like this have several advantages because they provoke a significant amount of peer-group interaction, they generally involve many of the themes and conflicts central to literature, and the participants are directly involved in dramatic creation.

Collage and other forms of non-verbal composition also provide useful beginning points for the teacher who wishes to help his students define their interests and needs. The teacher asks the students to create a collage (find an object, make a photo montage, paint a painting) which expresses something important about themselves. It doesn't matter what the composition "says"; it doesn't matter if the creator can say what it "says"; and there is no right or wrong way to do the composition. Once the compositions are finished, the students discuss them, asking each other and the composer whatever questions they wish to ask. Some students will wish to explain exactly what they mean in their composition, whereas others will prefer to remain silent about their own work and try to interpret other compositions.

After the students have had ample time to informally discuss the compositions, they might engage in a class discussion of the compositions: which are the most interesting or different? Which is the most confusing? Why? They might write essays describing the process they went through in creating their own compositions; or they might describe or interpret someone else's composition, or even their own. Finally, they might try to generate lists of topics, issues, conflicts, and people which seemed to be of special interest to them and others in the class, as evidenced by the non-verbal compositions and/or improvisations.

Once these lists have been generated the students might begin working independently or in groups on the creation of resource packets (or independent-study packets), an activity which allows them to pursue their individual interests, create their own materials, and share their ideas and interests with their classmates. The student begins by choosing some topic, theme, conflict, etc., which he finds particularly interesting; next, he goes about finding materials dealing with whatever topic he has chosen. For example, if the student chose to work on loneliness or old age, he might end up reading through poetry anthologies and short story anthologies to find appropriate poetry and fiction to include in the packet. He might go through magazines to find pictures of lonely or old people, or do research in the library to find articles on the subject.

His next job, after collecting materials, is to suggest things to do with the materials, to generate lists of activities which other students might do in response to particular items in the packet. Thus, there might be some general activities like interviewing some people in an old people's home, or taking a poll of the students in the class or the school to find out what their attitudes are toward old people. For a picture of an old person, some interesting activities might be to write what the person is thinking or feeling, or to write a short story or poem in response to the picture. Some students might enjoy doing a research-oriented study of old people and present their findings through expository writing. Others might enjoy using a camera to make a photo-montage of old people accompanied by a feature article explaining some of the pictures. In response to short stories or poems, students might write essays, stories, and poems of their own, make collages, make a film, or do improvisations related to the readings. /I wish to thank Dr. Stephen Judy of Michigan State University for his many ideas and suggestions regarding these resource packets./

The benefits of these resource packets are many. Because students make the packets themselves, the interest and reading levels of the materials are generally just right for the other members of the class. The students have the opportunity to participate in a genuine research project for a reason other than the project itself — their own interest.

And the individual research packets are concrete indications of their interests and the parts of themselves which they might want to share with other members of the class.

Of course, none of the suggestions presented here guarantee positive results, and the teacher who expects immediate success in a student-centered classroom will not only be quickly frustrated, but will also quickly give up the experiment and accept its failure. Quite simply, there are no fast, simple ways to teach people the complexities of reading, writing, and self understanding; we cannot "produce" fully-functioning people. At the very heart of a student-centered approach to teaching is the basic assumption that no *one* way of doing things is necessarily good for all students.

There are students (and I have had my share) for whom collage will be little more than a gimmick, and others for whom improvisations will be an impossibility. Some students will want to study grammer and write only expository essays. And some students may never become interested in resource packets. But though all students may not be interested in the *same* thing, they are all interested in *some*thing — and, no matter what that something is, they can read, write and talk about it.

Furthermore, just as students differ from each other, so also do teachers, and each teacher must find a way of teaching compatible to his own situation. A totally student-centered or open classroom is often a noisy, chaotic place, and a teacher in this kind of classroom must be at home with confusion and have the ability to differentiate between productive and counter-productive activities. Consequently, the teacher who has had little or no experience with open classroom techniques might be wise to move gradually toward student-centeredness.

The main point, here, is that this is not an all or nothing proposition. The teacher who is locked into a traditional system and who feels intimidated by either his colleagues or his superiors can modify the ideas suggested here in many ways. Ultimately, this discussion simply suggests that, in this age of accountability and measurement systems, we must stop tinkering and begin devising activities for which we wish to account.

The Question of Black Studies — An Analysis

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The black studies controversy — like other prevailing controversies in American education — arose out of the civil rights and the black power movements. In its fetal stage the controversy was echoed in a phrase that has become a worn though still meaningful cliche: "a relevant education." Students — white and black — utilized the phrase in their attacks on American academe and its institutions as carriers of racism and symbols of a wider social and political struggle. The campus-centered activities of this emotional and often violent struggle hastened the birth of black studies as an academic discipline and as the basis for curricula development. And though black studies programs are today a reality on many campuses, and though they have affected the curricula of many public school districts in various parts of the country, some troubling issues remain. The cardinal issues of the controversy (stated in positive form), as this writer discovered them in the articles that appear in the bibliography of this paper, are:

Issues of Fact

•1. *All-black faculties*: Only black teachers should teach black studies because they, and only they, can understand "the black experience."

2. *The shortage of teachers*: The shortage of black studies teachers can be remedied by hiring black people without the traditional academic credentials.

3. *Legitimacy of control*: Some of the leaders of American academe have forfeited the right to rule, because they helped to perpetuate the myth that education was, as Charles V. Hamilton says, ". . . value-free, objective, and above the social turmoil."

Issues of Casual Relationship

*4. *Black identity*: Black studies (simply defined as Negro history, Negro literature, Negro culture, and the social sciences applied to aspects of Negro life) and curricula based on them will solve the problem of black identity; that is, black studies instill in black students a positive self-image (also called by the writers: "self-concept," "ethnic pride", "ego development", and "racial dignity").

*5. *Brotherhood*: Black studies and curricula based on them (that is, curriculum contents and materials for use in the elementary and secondary schools) will foster the brotherhood of blacks and whites.

6. *Black leadership*: Black studies will forge a black intelligentsia and black leaders "equipped to provide leadership" on various levels of social, political, economic, and cultural action.

Issue of Value

7. *Separatism*: Black studies must be taught in separate programs and should not be integrated into the existing disciplines; black students require exclusively black social centers, student unions, dormitories, etc.

(Asterisks identify the three major issues among the above.)

1. *All-black Faculties*

The issue that only black teachers should teach black studies appears among the writers only in discussions of higher education. This fact betrays, of course, the origins of the issue which are rooted in the black power movement and its attempts to make certain social and political gains in those nationally recognized embodiments of power — the colleges and the universities. Thus, the demand for the black teacher in the black studies classroom was born not out of any rational discussion of its intrinsic worth, but as a steppingstone to seats of power and control over the forces that shape black group life. Recognizing the political and ideological criteria for this demand, the writers are allied in their condemnation of it and, in some cases, of those who acquiesced in it.

If we view, for a moment, the demand as a ruse to integrate certain faculties, our mild response should be that even if that end is attained, it would be generally acknowledged as blatantly artifical and, probably, ephemeral. Needless to say, other faculty members would view (as some already have) their black colleagues with a jaundiced eye for having seized what has been traditionally earned and highly prized — a faculty appointment. To create enmity in a sector

traditionally sympathetic (if not empathetic) to the plight of minorities seems unwise.

Despite the origins of the issue, those who now argue for the black teacher in the black studies classroom seem to rest their case on that undefined phenomenon — "the black experience." Whatever the "black experience" is, or has been, its existence is dependent on its relationship to the experience of a broader, integrated, national culture — which we might vaguely define as "American civilization." That this experience can *only* be interpreted in the classroom by a black man is debatable; that it can *best* be interpreted by a black man probably reflects a preference. In any event, if one were willing and able to fulfill each and every monopolistic demand or personal preference (which is not possible because of the shortage of black studies specialists, white or black) there is, as Eugene D. Genovese points out, another danger. It would dispel the hope of building "one or more distinguished black universities...based on the adherence to a specific ideology...as the Catholic universities demonstrated."

Moreover, the exclusion of white personnel from the black studies departments (a form of separatism by anyone's definition) severely reduces the size of the pool of teachers from which to choose, and its quality. Be that as it may, in the face of the issue of brotherhood — central to the black studies controversy — this entire issue pales.

2. *The Shortage of Teachers*

Following on the heels of the all-black principle for black studies faculties, and arising out of it, is one of the suggestions made to resolve the teacher shortage: eliminate the traditional teacher qualifications and credentials, specifically those required for members of collegiate instructional staffs. This suggestion is not as radical as the reaction of some writers would seem to indicate.

During the last decade, particularly, academe has welcomed onto the campus a growing number of persons without academic credentials but distinguished in, for example, belles-lettres or the fine arts; it has even provided their posts with special appellations, viz., "artist-in-residence" and "writer-in-residence." If so, why the outcry over the proposed suspension (made, usually, by black-power militants) of the credentials requirement?

Those who attack the proposal — and they represent the majority of the writers — as undermining the value of black studies as a discipline or demonstrating contempt for learning in general, are not, it seems, contesting the authority of institutions to waive academic formalities. Rather, the heart of the matter lies in the question: "Waive them for whom?" And it is a valid question.

Candidates supported by black power militants have included SNCC field workers, CORE members, and others who have backgrounds in social service work. (This fact bears a tangential relationship to the community-centered function of black studies which will be discussed as part of another issue, later in this analysis.) They are presented as "qualified" to teach not on the basis of their knowledge, or for having distinguished themselves in some area of learning or the arts, but because they possess a "specific ideology," "political orientation," or "philosophical leaning" — sanctioned by militant supporters as the "right" one.

When a candidate is presented solely on this basis, it seems reasonable for administrators to challenge his admission. Someone must decide, by some standard, who is "qualified." Though the standard may not include the traditional academic credentials, it should, this writer believes, require the candidate to present some evidence of his qualifications to teach black studies *as an academic discipline*, and not as the subject matter for cadre-training sessions. If black studies are regarded as the latter, then their place in the university is open to challenge. Second, it does not seem that such palliatives as an undeserved academic appointment will really take us much closer to eradicating social division and conflict.

3. *Legitimacy of Control*

The crux of the issue of control, despite the considerable ink and paper devoted to it, can be expressed in a word — distrust. This distrust can be seen as the product of the black man's awareness of the distortions of his heritage and experience that are presented in our curricula on all educational levels; the system of values and power that has permitted and fostered their existence; the use of education as a socializing process that aims, as Hamilton argues, at maintaining — in the economic, political, and social spheres — the status quo. Thus, the demand for total or partial control of black studies departments (mirrored in the demand for school decentralization or community control at the lower level) carries with it the hope of introducing new criteria into the establishment of curricula and the selection of teaching staff.

Reactions to the demand have implicitly varied. A few writers charge that by yielding to it, officials are merely exercising their paternalistic white racism in order to keep trouble down; or asserting, according to Clemmont E. Vontress, that they simply "do not care about the education and welfare of blacks." Others believe in granting to black studies departments the same degree of autonomy that exists in other academic areas. Others caution that complete autonomy may produce some disastrous results and cite, as John W.

Blassingame does, courses of questionable worth: "The Sociology of Black Sports," "Relevant Recreation in the Ghetto," and "The Selection and Preparation of Soul Food."

Today we are in the process of redefining both the student's and the community's roles in the administration of the educational or schooling process. This is evident in such developments as faculty evaluations, experimental decentralized school districts, student representation on collegiate trustee boards, and grading system options, among others. The demands for departmental control seem congruous with these developments. Therefore, in the last analysis, the question of autonomy is one of degrees: How much participation or power in the governing process should (or can) be granted to each of the interested parties or factions? The answer will probably be found only after some delicate experimentation, a good deal of give and take, and goodwill. One thing is sure: the exercise of authority in the sphere of education will no longer be the exclusive privilege of a single person, group, or faction.

4. *Black Identity*

Doubtless the relationship of black studies to black identity is the single most important and complex issue of the black studies question. It is commonplace for black power advocates, community leaders, students, and professional educators to assume that black studies (like school decentralization or community control) enhance the self-image of blacks. And it is a salient though relevant point that the literature on black studies discusses self-image *per se*; that is, there is only feeble consideration of the relationship of self-image to academic achievement or to occupational aspiration. But when the objectives of black studies — as we find them in the literature — are considered as a totality, it becomes clear that this particular issue actually addresses itself to both *general self-concept* (or self-perception) and *self-concept in relation to school and aspiration*.

The research concerning the affective aims of black studies is, as one might expect, extremely limited (as Rodney W. Roth's review of it makes clear); the evidence to prove that black studies is positively and significantly related to self-concept remains elusive. And if and when such scientific evidence is amassed, there is little expectation that it will prove black studies to be a panacea for the damaged self-concepts of blacks or a means of magically remaking America into the model egalitarian society aspired to in its constitution. The question occurs: Do we need such evidence?

The role of cultural heritage in providing spiritual sustenance and/or the basis for personal pride is well documented in human history. It seems axiomatic, therefore, that one's cultural heritage contributes to the myriad psychological fibers that go into the making

of one's value of the self. Whatever an individual's concept of himself might be, he can only benefit from the knowledge of his historical past and the achievements of others of his race. That such knowledge can be the foundation for positive self-assessment is universally recognized. *It is one of the uses of the past.*

Many of those who write on the subject of black studies hold, though it is sometimes only implied, that the self-fulfilling prophecy is operating in many of the schools blacks attend. Black studies or curricula developed from them, they assert, are helpful in minimizing, if not destroying, the effects of this phenomenon — described by William F. Brazziel (see Leedell W. Neyland) as "psychological lynching." How? They present the black student with human models that he can emulate and the achievements of blacks to which he can point with pride. What is really being argued, here, is that the pursuit of the self-fulfilling prophecy in blacks can be arrested through the emergence *in others* of a recognition that blacks have a cultural tradition worthy of study. That this shared recognition will help form the basis on which to build black identity is a fairly reasonable assumption. A man's assessment of himself would seem to encompass what others assess him to be.

Though little is known about the existence and operation of this psychological phenomenon — and even less about the relation of black studies to it — it is not unreasonable to expect that the schools create, at the very minimum, an atmosphere in which this phenomenon is least likely to occur, particularly as the result of their own curricula. Johnathan Kozol, the author of *Death at an Early Age,* has given us an excellent illustration of the reaction of black children when first exposed to a book written by a black man:

> That morning in the junior high school I read to the girls in that classroom about half a dozen poems by the Negro poet Langston Hughes. When I held up the book...they saw the picture of a Negro author, and they commented on that. Their comments had to do with a single, obvious, overriding fact: "Look — that man's col..red." (p. 178.)

5. *Brotherhood*

Here, as in the question of black identity, there is no hard evidence to prove the relationship of black studies to the brotherhood of man — the other affective aim of black studies. However, the lack of such evidence, and the scientific certitude that accompanies it, does not seem of concern (except in a few cases) to those writers who emphasize brotherhood as an outcome of black studies programs and curricula. They accept the relationship, and tellingly so, as self-evident.

The reason for this acceptance? It probably stems from the

national awareness that the distortions of the Afro-American contribution to all facets of our national life are among the factors that (1) created the desperate position in which many, many blacks today find themselves and (2) fostered, and continue to, white racism in and out of the classroom. Thus, set the record straight, argue the writers, and one of the barriers to brotherhood and social justice will have been removed. The view is not as wildly idealistic as it might seem initially.

There is, if the Kerner Report is accurate, a deep current of racism in American society. And insofar as brotherhood remains undisputed as a desirable objective (except, perhaps, among the radical fringe), perhaps we should use brotherhood in attaining it. This line of thought, rather than evidence, leads this writer to ask: Is it possible that black studies, working among other forces, can contribute to the environment in which the brotherhood of whites and blacks could be a reality? To be sure, it is unlikely that black studies courses and curricula will move the white racist to instantaneous empathy, unbridled breast-beating, and reparation; but such courses *can* provide the channel to new evaluations (and attitudes and behaviors) by dismantling the stereotypes that portray — as Richard D. Navies indicates — the Negro as "lazy", "siftless," "innately inferior," and as a second-rate citizen unworthy of an important role in society. So the question is answered positively. And doubtless it is an answer that is based on hope and not scientific evidence; or, to put it more accurately, on moral rather than metaphysical certitude.

For this writer, that certitude is enough to justify the time, effort, and expense required to establish black studies courses and curricula. So, after heeding the admonition that familiarity breeds contempt (as it sometimes does), we must — bearing in mind the racial unrest of the 1960s — acknowledge it as a risk worth taking; ignorance always creates, or seems to, a vacuum all too quickly occupied by suppositions, fears, and hate. And to ignore these forces is *not* a risk worth taking.

6. *Black Leadership*

Black studies programs have not yet produced any significant number of graduates who might form the potential base for a black leadership. However, it seems unlikely — judging by the kind of leadership that is expected by those who argue for this aim of black studies programs — that they will. For the "leadership" these advocates have in mind is closely coupled to another idea: namely, that the educational system should be committed (as Vontress explains) to the plight of the black man by direct involvement "in the affairs and concerns of the black ghetto" and neighborhood through community-centered activities, such as tutoring, day-care centers, cultural activities, and

remedial reading programs. By assigning this ancillary function to the educational process, some black studies advocates hope that a black leadership will arise from those students who have become familiar with the problems of the ghetto through community work; and that they will devote themselves, after graduating from a black studies program, to these problems as committed professionals.

Let us suppose, for argument's sake, that community work is within the purview of the university and that, in this case, it is affiliated with the black studies programs. Though such work might lead certain students to dedicate themselves to the problems of the ghetto, it cannot be argued that black studies programs are the best preparation for students who wish to solve them. On the contrary, as John W. Blassingame and others point out, a more sophisticated and pragmatic knowledge of such areas as "business practices, high finance, labor law and practices, judicial procedures, consumer practices, and the communications media," is called for. In short, "the tools for restructuring society" are *not* to be found in the study of Negro culture but, rather, in learning the operations of our rapidly changing technological society and the ways of exercising power in its political, economic, and social spheres.

It is naive, therefore, to anticipate that black studies programs will graduate black leaders who would function effectively to bring about the changes desperately needed in these spheres. The community-centered activities of black studies programs could provide some temporary relief for the ills of the ghetto; as far as functioning as a viable pool for black leadership, there is considerable doubt that they will work.

7. *Separatism*

This issue — confined to discussions of higher education, as in the case of all-black faculties — has two aspects, both of which are related to the question of autonomy and seem rooted in emotional needs rather than intellectual ones. First, there is the argument that black studies must be taught in separate programs and should not be integrated into the traditional academic disciplines of the colleges and universities. (The use of "integrated materials" is now common practice in many of the elementary and secondary schools — at least in those of the central cities. There, the attention is focused on improving the quality and variety of those materials and on the very important problem of teacher attitude and teacher training in regard to intergroup relations.) Second, some black students have expressed the need for exclusive educational facilities: social centers, student unions, and dormitories as emotional reinforcement and places of refuge in a hostile environment.

One of the major aims of the black power movement was, and

is, to correct the misrepresentation and unrealistic portrayal of the Negro in the curricula contents and materials. Early in the movement this objective was subsumed, apparently, in the goal of erecting symbols of power — such as autonomous black studies departments, operated by and for blacks. (In some cases militants called for the exclusion of whites from such programs. This paradoxical demand has, in all instances known to this writer, been rejected.) If we return to the original objective and recognize it as a desirable end for whites as well as blacks, then the argument for separate undergraduate programs should be reconsidered in the light of the questions that arise. By establishing separate programs, are we not "correcting" the misrepresentations *only* for those who elect to enroll in them? If the subject matter of black studies were incorporated (in some instances, as separate courses) into the context of existing disciplines — particularly in the instance of the social sciences — would they not be more meaningful to blacks and whites? How do we justify the costs of establishing new departments and programs when black studies (or certain courses) could be appropriately fitted into one or more existing disciplines, or interdepartmental or interdisciplinary programs — for example, American studies?

By denying black studies a separate and autonomous position in the academic scheme, we are not implying that the history and culture of blacks are unworthy of study by students and scholars. On the contrary, acceptance into the conventional academic disciplines seems an invitation to advocates of black studies to commit themselves to the serious scholarly work that is still to be done and to enrich the existing disciplines by accomplishing it. It is this lack of commitment, which surfaces after the political struggle has waned, that explains why some programs have either languished or failed so early in their history.

Navies, in his article on black social studies, has commented on the continued existence of separate courses: "There is a self-deprecating paradox in the assumption that black social studies or black studies programs, for that matter must exist forever as a special entity, for as long as there remains a need for separate courses at the elementary and secondary levels , relatively little will have been accomplished."

On the need for separate facilities, the writers are in agreement — viewing it as an attempt to alienate the races even further, to emphasize racial difference, to institute campus separatism. There is a special irony in the militants' demands that the "white power structure" provide separate but equal black facilities. Our history now records the complex court battles required to legally abrogate the separate but equal doctrine; and in several Southern states the separate but equal myth is perpetuated despite (or perhaps because of) the

Supreme Court's ruling ordering the immediate desegregation of the schools. Arguments that separate facilities are required to provide emotional reinforcement should win our sympathy alone; if we accede to them, we indirectly condone the patterns of racial prejudice that the civil rights movement has fought to break.

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The Film Course That Died

Kenneth V. McCluskey

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Film courses are the new wave of education on both the high school and college campuses. "The Relevance of Orson Wells to the *Karma Sutra*" or "The Swing Era as seen in the short subjects of Woody Herman" may be some of the titles of papers, studies and theses to come out of the sudden turn around of what had previously been looked down upon from the ivory towers as simple mass culture.

Orson Wells, Dalton Trumbo and John Huston are among the many authors, directors and others of movie moguldom who are finding homes at schools across the country which are pursuing the development of a New Criticism of Films.

High school teacher conferences and periodicals are aiming sections to deal with the use of the feature film in the classroom and those teachers so encouraged are spreading the use of film as literature throughout the country.

Having started a film course seven years ago and having watched it close down two years ago, I would like to let fly with some of my experiences which may serve as a guide of sorts to anyone courageous enough to want to get involved in showing movies to a group of kids for fun and almost no profit.

The beginning of my idea for a film course was with an article by Father John Culkin, S. J. from Fordham. In a Saturday Review article, "I Was a Teen-Age Movie Teacher," (July 16, 1966) Father Culkin outlined the need, purposes and theory behind the use of films in the high school. Armed with this information, I approached my high school principal. One of the few administrators who is open to ideas and who has probably said "Let's try it" more times than he cares to remember said, "Let's try it and see what happens." I submitted my idea to the Board of Education and with the traditional

fear and trepidation went to a board meeting to defend my idea and seek the money needed to finance the project. After waiting for an hour and a half for a salesman of band uniforms to finish his presentation, I was ushered into the Board Room. I made my five-minute presentation and answered questions from a non-member Episcopal priest who seemed more excited than the Board did about the idea. I was given the money to begin a film course.

So we began. The program was to be given at night with time to watch the film and a short discussion period to follow.

Our first problem was to find a room. After three films were shown in a classroom, it was decided that classrooms are not built for the showing of feature-length films. We next moved to the auditorium. The auditorium was fine except for two or three minor problems. Heat in an auditorium built for five hundred is almost non-existent when there are only thirty-five people in it. It is also almost impossible to conduct a discussion in such a room with so few people. With the addition of a new wing and a double-sized classroom with a rug on the floor, our location problem was solved. Everyone sat on the floor.

Now a new problem presented itself. Students under 18 cannot drive to school after dark in New York State unless they are going to a credit-bearing course. So, back to the Board of Education we went and got our course listed as a 1/2 local credit course.

We now took attendance and required a project. Projects ranged from critiques on films to slide shows to homemade movies. Some of these were poor while others showed a sense of film and its means of communications that the teacher would have been unable to achieve.

The discussion of the films also ranged from the profound to the inane. Some students were unable to get beyond the literal visual story while others took the films as a jumping off point to question the motives and personalities of the characters on the screen as well as their own motives and reactions to the films and conflicts they presented.

Everybody had his own favorite film and would loudly defend it as the best film ever made. In their beliefs, as in the discussion period, Fr. Culkin's rule that the teacher should not pretend to know more or "better" than the students was always upheld. If the teacher thought "Singing in the Rain" was a good film, the students wouldn't hesitate to point out that the only scene worth watching again was Donald O'Connor dancing up a wall. If the girls thought "To Kill a Mockingbird" was the saddest film they had ever seen, the boys would point out that they had cried when King Kong got killed.

On the whole, however, these students were probably typical of today's film audience. They had no respect for a film simply because it was old and of the genre known as "great." It had to be entertaining and moving for them to give it accolades.

"Little Caesar" was booed. They had seen Eliot Ness. "Tugboat Annie" was stale and contrived. But Buster Keaton in "The General" was great. Nor did modern films escape their judgment. "Guys and Dolls" was not as good as the school's production and long dance sequences in any musical film were boring. But Anthony Quinn was fantastic, especially in "Requiem for a Heavyweight" and, even though "A Night At the Opera" was predictable, it was hysterical.

Not all films were easy to judge because of technical flaws we sometimes ran into. A cinemascope version of "Hud" arrived when we didn't have a cinemascope lens. We watched a Paul Newman who looked as if he had been stretched on the rack. A projector broke down in the middle of "Citizens Kane" breaking the spell which Wells had achieved. The teacher put on the third reel of "Cry the Beloved Country" before the second making a film which even Igmar Bergman might find difficult to comprehend.

The teacher always had the problem of which pictures to show. While the students asked for "The Monster that Ate Seacaucus," the teacher had to keep in mind that the purpose of the films was educational and that was why the Board was putting its money into the course. The teacher also faced the problem of movies which the community would accept. If a student went home and told his parents he had seen a film which they had considered slightly more than sinful when it first appeared, the value of film course would be lessened. Of course, this still left a wide range and a great number of films as possible subjects for the course.

What did the students learn? They began to learn what the course had promised to teach: A knowledge of the difference between a good film and a bad one. We set out to explore the question, "What is greatness in films and how is it achieved?" We had begun. Our discussion period always began with the question, "Was the film any good? Why or why not?" Students who had previously been instructed in the novel because it was expected that they would encounter them in their lifetime were now being instructed in what they would encounter a great deal more — visual literature.

The end of this idealistic adventure came rather unexpectedly. While showing "Farenheit 451," appropriately enough, two members of the Board of Education came into the room. One stayed about two minutes, apparently didn't like the film, and left. The other sat down and began to watch the students. After five minutes he left

without comment. I followed and asked if anything were the matter. He said there wasn't but that he had to get to a Board meeting. He then turned and said, "You know there are boys and girls sitting on the floor in there next to each other in the dark." I explained that it was just like watching television; but he said, "But they don't lay on the floor with their girlfriends." I didn't think I should have explained that in many households I had been in in the district they did just that. I asked if there was anything he would want me to change and he said, "No, you're doing a fine job here, a real fine job." Completely confused by that comment, I went back to watch Montag go into the woods to memorize books.

Several weeks later the annual budget came up for discussion before the Board. Film course was dropped. In asking why, I was told a lack of funds made it impossible to continue the course. I was assured that everyone on the Board was sorry that the course had to be dropped but, "financial limitations...."

In discussing the dropping of the course with a friend who by chance happened to be at the board meeting, I was told that financial considerations had not been the whole issue. The Board member who had told me I was doing a fine job had in the two minutes it had taken him to walk to the board meeting decided that various and multiple forms of turpitude were taking place while the films were being shown.

Several ensuing requests that the film course be put back in the curriculum have been ignored.

So film course is no more. I miss it; but now I have more time to myself and, as usual, it is the students who are shortchanged.

The only time it hurts is when nearby schools call and ask about obtaining films for the course they started after hearing about the operation of our film course.

Ten Questions Most Often Asked of FOXFIRE

B. Eliot Wigginton

B. Eliot Wigginton has gained national attention for his innovative approach to teaching high school English which has resulted in the very successful Foxfire Quarterly *and* The Foxfire Book. *Mr. Wigginton has spoken about the program at many conferences and workshops across the country.*

Foxfire is a magazine published quarterly by high school students in Rabun Gap, Georgia. It deals with the hill folk in that area – their skills, their crafts, their folklore. Begun in 1967 as an English project in the classes of Eliot Wigginton, a young first-year teacher, the magazine soon grew into a school effort. Although Wigginton's class is officially responsible for it, many other students work on it as an extra-curricular activity. Foxfire *has not only captured the imagination of the students, it also has attracted national attention. In the following article, Wigginton answers some of the many questions he receives about* Foxfire.

In 1966, my first year of teaching, I found myself struggling to inflict a state-approved English curriculum upon a group of Appalachian ninth and tenth grade youngsters in a 240-pupil public school in Rabun Gap, Georgia. They made it clear they weren't interested through one smooth, perfectly executed maneuver: they tore the room apart.

Rather than quitting (the old, "There has to be a better way to make a living" syndrome), or forging ahead despite their objections (the, "No damned teenager is going to push me around" syndrome), I sat down with them to figure out how we were going to save what was left of the year. The result was *Foxfire*, a magazine of local Appalachian lore that they put together, edited, circulated, paid for and nurtured themselves. The first issue appeared in March of 1967. Now, in our seventh year, we have watched *Foxfire* grow into a magazine of international prominence. A book-length collection of major articles from the first four years of publication was brought out by Doubleday, sold over 300,000 copies in less than a year, and was praised by *Time, Life, Saturday Review,* and hundreds of other publications. The second volume, *Foxfire 2,* will be available soon. And the kids are not only being flown all over the country to speak, but are also in the unique position of having college scholarships thrust upon them.

All of which brings us to the *English Record* in the summer of

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'73. I'm going to confess to being lazy at this point. The crux of the matter is this: we now get hundreds of letters a week. Most of them ask questions. It is absolutely impossible to answer them all. If, however, I could answer most of the questions in an article, and then just duplicate the article and send it out to those who wrote asking those questions. . . Time saved — weeks; energy saved — immeasurable. The *English Record,* if it can forgive me, is being used for selfish purposes. But they brought this upon themselves by asking for the article in the first place. I hope this fills the bill. And so, here goes: answers to the questions most frequently asked about our work.

1. *We'd love to do a magazine like* Foxfire *out here in our part of the country. The problem is that out here we don't have much to write about. Somehow I feel that our part of the country isn't half as interesting as yours. What can we do?*

Now that's the kind of question I have little patience with. No one *ever* thinks there is as much to say about his little corner of the world as there is in some more romantic place like "Appalachia." Our own high school principal here in Rabun Gap took me aside one day not long ago and said, "You know, I never told you this before, but I'm going to tell you now. I was born and raised in this part of the country, and I've lived here all my life. When you told me about your magazine idea, I honestly believed you'd be lucky to come up with enough material for three issues." That was 23 issues ago, and we haven't even started.

The simple fact is that when you're dealing with people's lives and how they made it, you're dealing with a lot. In rural areas, you have not only all the directions for essentials like food (growing and preserving), shelter (houses, barns, spring houses, chicken coops, potato cellars and smoke houses), and clothing (styles, how to raise whatever made the thread, how to make what you use to produce the threads and the cloth, and how to dye and weave), but also things like transportation, furniture, toys, games, healing, delivering babies, burying the dead, hunting, and a thousand other things that people did to occupy their time.

They didn't make houses of poplar logs in Arizona since they had no trees. So what was their substitute and how was it used? They had to have houses. What did they come up with? You get the idea. People had common needs, but due to the variations in environment, they had hundreds of different ways of filling those needs — and all those ways are worth documenting.

In urban areas, same thing. The city has a thousand stories aching to be told. How does a neighborhood deal with crime? What stories

does the fruit peddler on the corner have to tell? What ghosts haunt the rooms of the poor in Spanish Harlem?

Every part of the country is as fascinating as ours — each has its own story to tell, each in its own words. Don't tell us you're in a dull area. Look at the tables of contents of the *Foxfire* books, find their equivalents in your area, and you'll find your days are filled with questions and topics still to be worked with. It's never-ending. Honest.

2. *I'm worried that if we start a project like yours, we'll have trouble getting people to talk. Do you run into problems like that?*

Once in a while, but rarely. The reason is that for the most part, the contacts are talking to their own grandchildren, or to kids whose grandparents they grew up with. In a rural area, especially, the old cliche that everyone knows everyone else (and is often kin) is absolutely true. And I don't know many older people who don't enjoy the company and affection of kids anyway.

All of which points up an interesting idea: it just may be that the kids from that culture will do a far better job of collecting its lore than a team of trained anthropologists from outside. A trained anthropologist may indeed be better skilled at asking pertinent questions and squeezing out pertinent answers, but I doubt his interviews can match the warmth and depth and affection of ours. Why people would want to open up to an equipment-laden stranger that they've never heard of, never met, and will never see again — not having the vaguest notion of what is to become of the information they *do* give — is beyond me.

We endured some early criticism from anthropologists who claimed we'd get out in the field with not the faintest idea of what to do and simply muddy up the waters for the pros who might want to work in our area someday. It's interesting to note that a lot of those men are using *The Foxfire Book* as a required text in their university courses now.

I would even be willing to go one step further into this and say that the kids in the area are the only ones who *should* be allowed to collect this information. They're the ones to whom it will eventually mean the most. It's their birthright, their legacy, and *they* — not strangers from the outside — should be the ultimate beneficiaries of whatever good results the project yields.

You'll have little trouble getting contacts to talk, and after the first few years of work, if you build a reputation for handling the

material honestly, competently, and sensitively (without criticizing customs you may be wary of, like faith healing), you'll have no trouble at all. They'll welcome you. And you must never betray that trust.

3. *How do you get the money to start it and to keep it going?*

One of the nicer things about a magazine is that it doesn't cost that much to start. You've just got to be willing to put in a lot of time that you won't be financially reimbursed for.

We started by sending the kids out into the community to parents, friends, service stations, drug stores and car agencies. They explained what they were up to and promised that every donor, no matter how small his donation, would have his name listed in a special section of the first issue and would get a copy of that issue signed by all the kids who put it together. We collected $450.00, took it to the local printer and asked him how many copies of an 80-page magazine he'd print for that money, accepted his figure of 600, gave him the money and the typed, camera-ready copy, and we had a magazine. We were immensely helped, of course, by the fact that the school had an electric typewriter they let us use to prepare the pages (you can rent one if they don't) and I had a camera and tape recorder (a used camera and a $40 cassette recorder will do fine).

Once the magazine is out, all you have to do is figure how much it cost you per copy, double that figure, make that your price per copy, and sell subscriptions. The extra money you bring in will pay for postage, envelopes, tapes and film. Pay for other incidentals out of your own pocket. Hell, you can stand it. If you keep the magazine fairly small and make it pay for itself through subscriptions, all is well.

Selling subscriptions is not the easiest job in the world, but it's easier than you think. Most of our early ones came from articles written about us in local and regional newspapers and state magazines. We approached them all personally and found almost all of them hungry for news of this sort. Who can resist a group of high school kids really *talking* to adults for the first time instead of tuning them out? It's a natural story for them.

If you do your job well, those subscribers will not only renew their own subscriptions, but will also purchase additional ones as Christmas and birthday gifts for friends. And as your reputation grows, you can count on library subscriptions — and libraries almost always renew.

One note: If you're going to count on subscribers, make up your

mind before you start to get in there and stay with it. If you sell 1,000 subscriptions and then decide to quit, you're going to owe a lot of people a lot of money for the issues they didn't receive but paid for. And by folding up, you're probably also going to disappoint a lot of kids. I've got no patience for those teachers who storm into a school, start a lot of projects, turn on a lot of kids, and then walk away leaving those kids behind to face an even emptier school career now that they've seen what it really *could* be like. If you're not going to stick with it until it's outlived its usefulness, don't start it. That's the biggest mistake the VISTAs made in counties like ours; but we all know that story....

4. *What early mistakes did you make that we should avoid?*

Tons of them. The stupidest was not copyrighting our first two issues. It's childishly simple to do. Just write the Register of Copyrights/Library of Congress/Washington, D.C. 20540 and ask for Form B. Fill it out and send it with two copies of the magazine and $6 to the same address. Done — as long as you remembered to print the magazine so that it *already carried* the copyright notice (as though it had already been copyrighted) when it came off the press.

A second mistake was using too small a printer. A large printer with giant equipment can print 32 pages of a magazine in the same time it takes a smaller printer to produce 4 pages. Shop around and get estimates. You'll be surprised at the variation in price.

Another blunder was an early trend to get too complicated and make too much busy work for ourselves. When people bought subscriptions for friends as gifts, we offered to let them know, if they wished, when the subscriptions they had purchased expired. It turned into a nightmare of record keeping, and we finally had to drop it and run. The kids had better things to do than to spend all day hunched over files.

In addition: We didn't start out charging the right subscription price and had to change our rates three times in four years. Insane.

We never fully realized the incredible flexibility of the photo-offset process, and so our first issues came out looking drab and dull and lifeless. Know everything possible about the printing processes available to you and take full advantage of the strengths of the one you choose.

We lent things freely. Never lend out your tapes or negatives to outside writers, researchers, or the like. Keep every single one of them on file, and *keep* them. Things lent have a tendency to stay

lent, and I speak from bitter experience. Once they're gone, you have no control over how they're used. And sometimes even the most well-meaning person loses them by accident. You'll know what I mean after you've lent a great tape to a friend, had him lose or misplace it, and then gone back to the contact to retape the interview only to find she's since died.

We sometimes failed to follow up news leads promptly. A good friend of mine — a well-respected poet — told me repeatedly to tape a man named Uncle Iv Owen, perhaps the greatest talker and story teller in these mountains. I put if off, and he died before the kids and I got there. I'll never forgive myself for that one.

There were other mistakes, but those were the big ones. We survived them, but often I look back and feel I was so stupid we didn't deserve to.

One thing we *did* do right that I'd encourage: We printed enough "extra" issues each time that we could put away 25 copies of each and forbid anyone to touch them. Thus we have 25 complete sets of the magazine — priceless now — that we can use for fund-raising in the future.

5. *Once you decide to start, how do you get the kids interested, and how do you maintain motivation?*

There are a number of ways to get them started. I simply offered to let them put the texts away and produce one issue of a magazine instead (at the beginning we had little hope of its ever being more than a one-shot deal. I planned to produce one magazine so they could see what that was like, and then move on to something else.) If you agree to let them close the texts, they'll go for anything you suggest. I could have said, "Let's go repaint the lines on highway 441" and they would have been with me to a man.

You can also whet their appetites for this sort of thing by bringing into class someone from the community who can show them how to do a particular skill or craft, or who is a great story-teller. Just shove back the chairs and let them sit on the floor around his feet. Better yet, take the whole group outdoors and sit on the grass. Once they've been exposed to a couple of contacts, they'll be ready.

Maintaining motivation with a project of this sort, we have found, is no trouble at all. In fact, the number of students who want to work with us increases every year. At this point, we have about 70 signed up — nearly 35 percent of our student body.

Aside from the fact that the kids are out of class frequently, and are often engaged in meeting people who genuinely like to have them around, there is one advantage to a magazine in motivating a student that few activities can match: seeing in print something he's worked on for weeks and knowing it will be seen and read by thousands of people, many of whom will write in and compliment him personally. Parents are proud, teachers pay attention — and sometimes begin to see the student in a different light as someone who *does* have potential — and the other kids often crowd around with a "Hey, that really does look great." The student feels he's done something genuinely worthwhile, and he wants to make that feeling happen again and again.

In addition to the above, we are also able to maintain motivation in other ways. There are few things that can match, for example, the kick a kid gets out of printing a great photograph he took himself last week and then seeing it used in the magazine. We have our own darkroom for this purpose, and the kids use it every day.

In addition, the kids are made to feel important by the fact that we use them exclusively as teachers for the newer students; by the reception they get from audiences they speak to at conventions across the country; by colleges who offer them scholarships; by newspapers and magazines that interview them and sometimes ask for articles from them (we have one girl now writing an article for *Seventeen* for which she will be paid $400); and by people in the community forever cornering them and asking them about our newest projects. They are made to feel important because they *are* important — without them our work would have no further reason to exist.

And finally, it must be remembered that even without being able to offer them trips, college scholarships and glamor, motivation can often be maintained by the personality of the advisor/teacher alone. If that adult is one whom the students love and want to be around, and if that adult is one who will spend hours beyond the school day with them, and if that adult will stand up for them and support them and slap them on the back when they do something well, and if that adult will conscientiously use at least *some* kids that others ignore or ridicule (and get his smarter kids working with him to make them feel needed and valuable), and if that adult will take pains to be there and be available when a kid needs him, the project will develop a spirit and a cameraderie and a thrust of its own that will carry it through the worst of times. The kids must know the office is *theirs*, they must feel at home there, they must feel the adult in charge is genuinely on their side, and they must believe that they are engaged in a struggle that has real validity and worth. Given that, they can lick the world.

6. *I've heard you exist inside the structure of your school as a completely independent organization with a staff and funds and offices of your own. How did you manage that?*

When I first proposed the idea of a magazine to our administration, they were a little upset. Most of their concern centered around the fact that we might go broke, and then someone might owe a lot of subscribers money. They gave us permission to start the magazine on one condition: that I be personally responsible for any debts or problems that might result. I agreed.

Later, as we found we needed things we couldn't pay for (like videotape and darkroom equipment), we began to approach foundations for help, and we found that it would be much easier to attract grants and donations if we were a non-profit, tax exempt organization. This would allow donors to write their contributions off their income taxes, and so on. Through a college friend, I found a sympathetic lawyer who did the necessary paper work and earned himself a spot on our Board of Directors as payment.

As a corporation, we absolved the school of any responsibility for any trouble we might later find ourselves in. That also meant that any cash income that resulted from our work could be spent as we saw fit. It was ours and did not need to go through the school's accounting system — something we have since found to be a distinct advantage.

And all of us are happy with the results. From our point of view, we are independent of the school and can do pretty much what we want to do. They supply us with office space, and, more important, they allow us to use their students. They can ask us to leave at any time if we abuse that very special privilege.

We, in turn, are the cause of their receiving some of the finest publicity of any school in this country, and they haven't had to pay a dime for it. The kids are getting into colleges, the state board of education is highly complimentary of the program (and the school that fostered it), the parents are happy because their kids are happy, and the teachers are supportive because we don't take undue advantage of our status. If the school should ever become too restrictive, they know that we, as a separate organization, could pull out and leave them with a lot of explaining to do.

And so it's all worked out for the best as a very profitable cooperation between two very different groups. I recommend the arrangement highly.

7. Some teachers in your school must be jealous of your position. How do you deal with that?

There may be some jealousy existing on the campus due to the fact that I travel a good bit, have a paid staff, receive a good bit of publicity, and so on. If it is here, however, I see little of it.

The fact is, we try our best to cut off the possiblity of that happening in a number of ways. First, we are very conscious of the fact that we are dealing with teachers who are pretty jealous of their territory, and so we meet each of them individually, talk with them, and explain that we insist (and this is true) that a kid keep up his grades if he works with us. If he's doing poorly in a subject, we don't get him out of that class at all for interviews. That also ruins his chances for making two or three-day trips and gives him added incentive to keep things in shape. Any work missed must be made up. At any time, the teacher can refuse to excuse him from class for interviews.

Second, we have a fairly elaborate class excuse system. The student must take a permission slip to the teacher signed by me or someone on my staff asking permission to be excused from a class; he must take it two days in advance of the interview, and that slip signed by the teacher(s) involved then acts as his admission ticket to the interview. No slip, no interview. And we take care to make sure that no student is excused from any one class more than once a week unless he is on a major two or three-day trip.

Now I don't like either of the above regulations at all. In the best of all worlds, teachers would recognize that these interviews do more for the kids' spirits and general education than most anything the teachers could offer in their classrooms. (At least, *I* believe that!) I am conscious, however, of the fact that at any given time a teacher can say, "You can't have my kids anymore," and that's going to really cramp our style. We *do* conduct interviews after school and in the evenings, but the school hours are our strongest times — the kids are fresh, alert, ready to go, and we find we get better results. So we cultivate those teacher relationships and encourage the kids to do the same — even though they may not like it.

In addition, we often find ourselves thanking and praising teachers for their willingness to work with us, even though such praise is sometimes not due. Call it "buttering up" if you will; but we use it, and we find it works. Teachers get free copies of the magazines and books, the kids in general try hard in their classes, and I try to be as generous and as considerate as possible towards them. If that's what it takes to get those kids, I'll do it. And I *think* it stops much of the jealousy.

8. *Isn't it dangerous focusing most of your attention on the past instead of dealing with the present and its very real problems?*

I think it probably would be if we indeed did focus exclusively on the past. The fact of the matter is that we focus primarily on the student and what he personally gains from the process of gathering and presenting material to an outside audience. We're primarily interested in a student's self-esteem. (What happens to him when he designs a layout for an article, sees it printed, and knows it's good), and a student's self-confidence and sense of worth and value (what happens to him when he stands up in front of a crowd and gives a talk that results in a standing ovation; what happens to him when he gets a college scholarship because of his work with the magazine). The subject matter, in considerations like those, becomes almost irrelevant. It's the *process* that's important and the skills he gains from that.

As to our subject matter, we try not to focus on the past as a matter of nostalgia ("Live this way and you will be forever happy.") but as a source of strength and pride. What is it that these people have to tell us that is still valid today in 1973? Is it that we do *not,* in fact, have to have all the "things" that TV commercials insist we must have to be happy? Is it that we do not have to feel victimized and helpless, unable even to build an addition onto our own home by ourselves, in the twentieth century? Is it that there are enduring values in community sharing and interdependency that are just as valid today as they were then? Is it that those people made it against incredible odds, and you can too? Is it that this "minority" group has something valuable to tell us — something worth listening to — and so it stands to reason that other "minority" groups do too? Or is it all these things?

And, though it is not often reflected in the pages of *Foxfire,* we spend a hell of a lot of time in class talking about the problems our county now faces: extensive land development, clear cutting on national forest land, highway extensions through our wilderness, pollution, county politics, the insanity of drug abuse, and so on.

The important thing is that through the work with *Foxfire,* our students will feel competent enough, and willing enough, to deal with some of these problems. That is our hope; and that, if anything, must prove to be our most enduring contribution.

9. *Is the project exploitative? Are you stealing from people for your own self-gain? What happens to your money – the royalties from the books, for example?*

The project would be exploitative if we were anthropologists who came in from the outside, got people to talk, took the material away, published it, made some money, and stuck it in our pockets.

As it is, nothing of that sort happens, and anyone who accuses us of it doesn't understand what we're all about.

First, and most important, we have not come in from the outside to steal. We are here, in Rabun County, to stay and to help out wherever and whenever we can. All of the material collected stays here permanently to exist as a community archive.

Second, all of the money we earn also stays here. It is used for summer salaries for the kids who work with us during that vacation (money that they use for college), for the salaries of kids that we attract back to the area to work with us full time, for paying people to make objects for us for the museum we are now building, for donations to churches and social groups in our area, for finding craftsmen and paying for their materials and marketing their products at no expense to them whatever, and for supplies that we use in our work such as film and tape.

Third, through the program, we are giving some of the kids in this area a far richer educational experience than they would ever have received otherwise. They are beginning to understand their families, their community and themselves as they would never have understood those things before.

It probably, in fact, comes as close as possible to being anything *but* exploitative, except in the sense that we are all using each other for the ultimate (I hope) good of the whole.

10. *Will success spoil* Foxfire?

Not a chance. The main reason is that our student staff is constantly turning over as old ones graduate and new ones move in. No one has a chance to stay around long enough to get either "set" or flattered to the point of being self-indulgent. Every group of new kids brings new ideas and new approaches, and we constantly work to make sure that those new ideas can be tried. We never allow ourselves to become stiff enough that there evolves only one way to do any of the jobs we do — be it circulation, photography, article writing, or layout.

In addition, we work to make sure that the kids are constantly having those experiences out in the community that make this such exciting work — and not devoting the majority of their time just

to the "running of an organization."

And we insist that the kids come first in any offers that come from the outside. I get hundreds of offers to speak at colleges and conventions all over the country. I only accept a few, and only those from groups that agree to pay all expenses for three students in addition to myself. Letters that come in, the answering of which will take away from the work with the kids, simply have to wait until a time when the kids aren't around. The same goes for articles. This one, for example, is being written at 3 a.m. — and only because we can use it to answer many of the letters that arrive each week from people who might like to do the same thing and are asking for help.

The simple fact is that the major goals must be kept first, and things that get in the way of those goals must be ignored. In our case, the goals revolve around high school kids and their sense of place, self and self-esteem; and our community, how it works, how and why it suffers or exults, and how we can contribute to its strength. Things that bleed our energy in other directions are usually dropped.

Success, I believe, can only strengthen us and make us *more* able to fulfill all those dreams we started out with. I used to be afraid of it, but I'm not any more. I'm using it to our own advantage.

For those of you out there on the front lines who hope to do the same, I wish you well. Remember, the kids and their needs come first. Forget the rest. If you do all you can to affect the former, the rest will take care of itself.

A No-Red-Pencil Composition Program

Elizabeth Acheson

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You, the reader of this article, probably do not mutilate your pupils' compositions with red marks but you may have a colleague who can't seem to break out of the habit. Red penciling seems somewhat congenital. As a child, a teacher's compositions were "corrected," purged of errors, so as an adult this person corrects and purges her pupils' papers even though in college her language arts instructors told her that negative feedback on creative ventures was stultifying. If you and your co-workers have escaped the red pencil morass, skip this article. It's not for you.

As one from the ivy-tower who has time and opportunities to visit many elementary classrooms (isn't it too bad teachers of children can't be freed, perhaps once a month, to visit colleagues near and far — good and not so good — to find new ways of doing things or to find out for the first time how competent a job they really are doing!) I find myself, as I was for about nine and a half years, in all too many classrooms. I find teachers hesitant to share packs of composition papers with me. Could this be because they haven't had the chance to "correct" them yet, or they realize they have really laid on the red pencil and feel, perhaps, I'd not approve? Maybe they feel their children haven't shown evidence of their teaching. These teachers, apparently would still like to know how to teach composition effectively without slashing away with their own pens — it takes so much time; it's damaging to the child's self concept — yet the key to how a no-red-pencil composition program can be made successful has elluded them.

Other teachers seem to come charging to the colors. They stab away at their children's papers with red marks; they're earning their pay and, by golly, their children are learning the mechanics of writing. All this is conveyed with such confidence — almost joie de vivre — one imagines them to be contented with their composition program; yet even with these teachers one senses the defensiveness for their

bloodying of papers to be their survival technique in the thou-shalt-teach-composition-correctly storm.

An account of my slow enlightenment might be encouraging to teachers who feel as I did, who want to abandon their practice of writing red penciled comments on composition — who'd even like to get rid of having to read all those stories — yet they want to help their pupils improve their written composition.

After teaching fifth grade for nine and a half years I found myself in my first language arts methods course. Miriam Wilt was the instructor and Alvina Treut Burrows, *et al.*, *They All Want to Write*[1] was one of our resources. I went into the course with a shored up composition teaching program that I thought sounded great yet produced disasterous results. Kids came into my class writing chatty, spontaneous little bits, well peppered with mechanical difficulties. None was so confused as to prevent me from comprehending its writer's message. Teeth clenched and red pencil firmly in hand, I would set about the task I perceived the school board was paying me for. I'm not a dull woman. I do have bits of creativity in me. Instead of X-ing out the errors, or correcting them myself (Heaven forbid! The child would *never* learn if he didn't experience the correcting process.) I had devised a numerical code, thirteen symbols to indicate each of thirteen mechanical errors I felt it my duty to eradicate. (Not one symbol to commend a phrase to a child, to make him feel any hope of ever writing anything worth reading!) My wards would take one glance at their bloodied papers over which I'd labored about twenty minutes apiece, scrunch them up and throw them in the trash.

Their writing got terser and safer and duller as the year went on. Perhaps there were fewer mechanical errors but, God, were they dull!

Gen, a second grade teacher I knew, would occasionally mention to me how sad it was to burden kids' compositions with corrections of errors which they really couldn't be held responsible for, and to ignore the content of the child's message. Each time she said this I'd return to my classroom full of fresh resolve to throw away my red pencil.

I knew there was no evidence citing the correction of themes as resulting in improved compositions. The only preparation published writers seem to have is vast amounts of reading and much experience in writing, both processes usually commencing at an early age and carried out on their own. My children were reading quite widely on their own and we enjoyed my reading to the class as a whole after lunch each day. Our librarian made books an easily accessible treat. It was the written composition that was such a bore. The children

dreaded it. The topic or reason for writing never really meant anything to them. I actually dreaded the correction task I thought necessary. Packs of unread (one didn't read, unless to correct!) compositions stacked up and dragged me down. Sundays were ruined either by *worrying* about the papers I should be correcting or by the actual correction of them. Therefore, not much assigned writing was done in my class and probably precious little self-initiated writing was done outside!

After talking with Gen downstairs I'd go back to my room and plan what I thought would be a really creative, writing lesson. I'd heard somewhere that there were three conditions that were necessary to conduct a no-red-pencil composition program. First, no child writes if he doesn't want to. Then, those who choose to write needn't write on any specified topic. Finally, no child is forced to share his creation if he'd rather not.

Armed with this recipe and good intentions I'd naively face my class the next day. Any elementary teacher can picture the chaotic mess that resulted. Twenty minutes later thirty frustrated, bewildered, thoroughly squelched youngsters were sitting glowering at me from behind folded hands waiting to be told to open their social studies book page such and such while I — equally frustrated, a bitter, but-I-tried-so-hard, teacher — fought back tears and finished dumping the partially scribbled-on sheets of paper into the basket as I tried to tell myself that all that theory about unstructured teaching was for the birds. This telling didn't quite work. Something always told me that my attempts failed because some things were missing in the build up to this lesson.

These are the supplimentary ingredients I was unaware of that came to light in my language arts methods course. A basic necessity for me is the feeling that someone back there believes in me and will help me make my ideas work. If this is important for you, look around your school to see who your accomplice might be. Herbert Kohl[2] suggests that only a teacher who can sit in the teachers' lounge and admit things aren't all peaches and cream in her room will have the integrity to be of use to a seeking teacher. The teacher who blames the kids, the principal, the materials or lack of them, or the parents for her problems without finding any short comings in her own work, probably can't be much more honest with you. With the security that someone else cares about your pupils and you, you can start developing some of these basic conditions that will support your no-red-pencil composition program. The three conditions I had heard, of course, are sound; what needs to be spelled out are the necessary "givens" to make them work.

In order to say to children, "This is a time when some of you might like to write down your rocket trip to the moon. Some of you may prefer to record your experience in a different manner," you need to have developed with your class a list of specific options to writing. In a large, carpeted, acoustically dead room, you can allow musical or dramatic activities to go on far away from the writing area. But children in my small, traditional, wood floored, glass and plaster room had to opt for quiet activities such as drawing, painting, cutting, pasting, and sewing.

We all understood that composition was a creative process demanding concentration. Uninterupted time was to be highly respected and never infringed upon by anyone. My children could not understand why uninterupted concentration was so prized as long as I failed to respect it. Once I began to scrupulously respect the sanctuary of the writing area, the children quickly realized that Teddy's staring out the window wasn't wasting time; it was Teddy's incubation or thinking time. Carol's gum chewing, while poking holes in a paper, was part of her rumination process that helped her ideas to jell. Even a child walking aimlessly around the room picking up things to examine as he went was not to be disturbed because writing ideas were brewing.

Once it is recognized that the carrying out of optional activities cannot interfere with these writing demands, a class can devise a basic list of projects that will not disturb the writers. At the beginning of each writing time, the teacher may ask for modifications of this list or make some herself when a particularly appropriate option comes to mind. "Now that you've just returned from the moon, perhaps some of you would like to mount the moon rocks you collected and label them." This would necessitate going out onto the playground to collect stones (*if* you have a stone strewn playground!), devising names for the specimens and neatly printing labels for each rock.

Besides helping the children generate a list of activity options, the teacher needs to check her list of other responsiblities for making the choice of writing or not writing valid. There are three concerns. The first is to arrange the room so that there is a place for the non-writers away from the writers. There also needs to be a place for pre-creation talk. Usually children gather together to talk over an experience before expressing in another medium their feelings about it. Children need to feel free to leave this group immediately to get to the job of creating if they're all revved up to produce. Talk may only dampen their excitement. Perhaps after two or three minutes most of the children will be ready to write or move on to whatever means of expresssion they've selected. There are likely to be some, however, who still need to untangle a few more story strands with a classmate, develop another possible ploy, or ask you for a particular

bit of information. As long as the talking section of the room is removed from the writers and the talkers talk quietly, you'll feel comfortable with this arrangement.

Your second responsibility is one of a facilitator and observer. Occasionally you'll be called on to whisper information to writers as they work. But as children become secure in personal (phonetic) spelling, and in writing rough drafts, you will be less in demand as chief speller so your time can now be occupied by observing who isn't writing this period. (I actually had to keep a check sheet for this as my mind is a seive). What are they doing instead? Analyze their writing skills and needs in other writing situations. Perhaps his limited ability in penmanship or spelling is preventing this child from writing. If this is so, encourage him to dictate his story to you, to a literate classmate *he* selects, or to a tape recorder for you to transcribe on paper for him later. If his writing skills are adequate, let him enjoy the optional activities for awhile. He may just need a rest.

You'll need to plan with each non-writer how he might share his work with the class at the end of the day. Each child needs to feel good about the use of his creative time. Listen carefully to his comments before, during and after his work. Demand high respect from him for his work.

You will learn to make these notations and arrangements quickly after the first two or three writing periods. The best use you can make of your time is to write, too. If the children ask you to share your writing with them, on occasion, at your discretion, you do so. You model the stance of a writer. They see you finding writing important and gratifying. They note that sometimes you choose to share and other times you prefer to keep it to yourself. You are giving part of yourself to them — the greatest gift one person can make to another.

Your final responsibility when you tell the children they don't have to write if they don't want to, is to provide them with time to share their creations. Writing takes on a charm when the children know there will be a sharing time later on. My children insisted on a sharing time once a day. (Why sharing a picture, sculpture or some other construction never seemed as gratifying to my children as sharing stories, I can't explain. Perhaps drama and dance would have, but these were outside our realm of quiet options.) Sharing consisted of having any child who wished read his story to the rest of the class. Ground rules were set for this experience. When a creator was generous enough to share his creation with us, we never found fault. If it was funny we laughed; if it rang true to our own experience we told him so. Our rapt attention communicated our interest. During sharing time we were not in business to be critical.

One experience that almost finished my writing program was of the type classically feared by the teacher of children from middle class homes. One afternoon the children seemed particularly eager for sharing time to come. Randy was to read her story first and a group of children were abetting her. Randy had entered this school at the beginning of the year and she had sat in a front seat with her hands folded looking shyly at the teacher ever since — the traditionally ideal pupil. Today her eyes were dancing and she stepped from one foot to the other as she read.

"One day we came to school and everything was awful. Miss Acheson had gone off her rocker during the night and was making us do crazy work like 2 x 2 and write *cat* 2,000 times. Randy told her she wouldn't so Miss Acheson stomped up to Randy's desk and said, 'You will too.'

" 'No, I won't and you can't make me!' said Randy as she pushed her books on the floor. Miss Acheson turned around and stomped away. Randy got up and kicked her in the ass."

At this point in the exciting narrative the whole class turned around in horror and looked at me as I sat doodling on a tablet at the back of the group. Just that morning on the subway I'd been reading in Burrows *et al.*, that children frequently write about things their middle class and somewhat middle aged teachers don't care to read about, and that we as teachers need to guard against communicating disapproval. When a child spills all the family's beans out into his writing, this story isn't for sharing. Nor is his exploration into his own psyche. Obscenities weren't mentioned explicitly but I popped these into that category.

"My, what an exciting story, Randy. Who's next." got me off the hook that day but sharing period next day brought little Latvian Peter's story. He had been in this country less than a year working very hard, doing well, also the traditionally ideal pupil. Peter's story was of some GI's during World War II(?). They were rushing from their trenches across no-man's land when they fell in the mud on their asses.

This shocker I passed over as Randy's had been but it was obvious that something basic had to be done. A patch and paste job wouldn't suffice. Luckily the thought came that if the audience had a responsibility to the sharers not to be critical, the sharer had a responsibility to his audience not to embarrass. Perhaps there were some topics or words that were inappropriate for sharing in the classroom. Children need to realize that words are just symbols that signal many things to their decoders. There is nothing inherently bad about the word ass; it's just that when a child (whose mouth would be washed

out at home were his mother to hear him use it) uses it in school, it signals to all its hearers that the child is trying to shock. Perhaps Randy wanted attention from her classmates for being daring. Perhaps she'd folded her hands so hard and smiled so long at me she had to strike out someway.

The labeling of obsenities as embarrassing to the listeners didn't solve Randy's problem that day; that took the rest of the year to work on and unfortunately I don't recall any great break through. However, this ploy did save the writing program.

"Write Whatever You Wish To..."

The second pillar of this writing program is the children's freedom to write what they want on a topic of burning concern to them instead of producing a page of a prescribed style of writing on an assigned topic.

Well, how many of your kids have burning issues to write on? There are usually one or two but what are the other thirty children to do? My original understanding of the no-red-pencil theory had as part of the inspiring instructions, "... and those of you who *do* write may write about anything you'd like!" Totally daft, you're saying. All right, you'd know not to start a lesson that way; and you'd know how to motivate individual lessons effectively. What may help are some ongoing, prewriting activities that will help the children to be more on their own when writing.

First of all, the classroom atmosphere needs to be supportive, flexible and stimulating, but the petty, rigid, inhibited teacher is unlikely to be able to pull this one off! We all have a responsibility to see that this gal gets some help. She's pretty unhappy and her kids must be having a time of it — and not only during creative writing. (The teacher's mental health directly influences her pupil's development, yet the overall attitude in educational circles seems to be such, that should a teacher seek professional help to improve the quality of her relationship with her class, she's not fit to be in the classroom. We need to educate each other on the sagacity of psychiatric guidance in personality development.)

In a secure atmosphere the class feels safe to explore, experience and share thereby developing amazing sensory vocabularies, the second aid to independent writing. I would open a window after a rain, pause a moment, and invite the children to close their eyes to describe what they smell. In the spring or fall the lawns and trees outside the window provided musty humus odors, the romance of azaleas, or zingy grass clippings. Other times we smelled the pungent smoke of the factory up-wind from the school or maybe the delectible aroma

of donuts and bread from the school cafeteria. Flowers brought in by a child, wet wool on a rainy day, the sweaty gym, dusty auditorium — there were all sorts of smells to be noted simply as sensations, not as value judgments.

Tactile experiences seemed harder to make happen. When we read about Helen Keller, some of the children spent "blind hours" being led around while they felt their surroundings. This was a humbling experience for both children, to learn what it means to be dependent on another so completely. The child-being-led's senses of touch, smell, and sound were revitalized. Textbooks could be identified by the feel of the binding, their size and thickness; outdoor clothing in the closet could be located by counting hooks and feeling the texture of the material.

Smells were also useful when our sight was curtailed. Our coats smelled like us. Jack's father always smoked cigars as he drove Jack to school. Jean wore her coat when she took care of Smoky, her pony, so her coat was easy for her to find. The fur on the hood of Helene's told her she had the right jacket and the cool, brass buttons on Tony's coat signaled him he'd located his. We discussed the difference between smooth and soft, hard and harsh. We felt the difference in the coolness of porcelain and that of pottery, which for some reason seemed warmer. This study was as fascinating to the teacher as to the children.

We worked on precision in describing sounds in ways other than loud and soft. We listened to music and to noises closely; those in the hall, outside the building, on the radio. Each time we strived to describe what we heard so that someone who had not heard it would know what we'd experienced. We learned that metaphors and similes were helpful in describing the other sense experiences. "The plodding sounds of the young man practicing his trumpet, each tone a rhomboid forcing its way through the night air." "The chalk squeeled down the board." "Plump, squeak, plump, went Mr. Carter's rubber soled shoes down the hall." Teachers' and parents' cars were identified by sound. Some throbbed, some whirred, putted, rat-ta-tatted, chugged, even wheezed.

We learned the importance of texture, temperature, and smell to our eating experiences. Various textures of foods eaten with our noses blocked enhanced texture; tender, grained foods, crisp foods and mushy foods. Drops of brine, sugar syrup, and vinegar dripped separately on tongues demonstrated to us the difference between the salty, the sweet, and the sour. Discussions of school lunches had never been so profound or articulate.

These forays into the realms of senses and their messages were mostly casual, done sometimes in conjection with science, rarely ever

tied in with language arts. Times spent in this way sent the kids home saying, "We didn't do anything between recess and lunch this morning." I should have helped the children see what learning was going on here. I was eager for the children to enjoy their explorations.

The third condition necessary to make a reality of "You can write about anything you want to," is probably the most important. The children must be able to trust their reader completely. They must learn quickly that there are some topics they'll not share with the whole class, but everything they want to share with you will be accepted completely, sympathetically, and with dignity; no fantasies too lurid, no experiences too shocking. The child needs to feel sure that nothing he shares with you is repeated by you. If one mother expresses to her child knowledge of a fantasy he shared with you, no other child will feel totally secure with you. If another teacher or child indicates familiarity with content from a child's writing, damage is done that will take years to overcome. "Don't write anything for Miss Jones to read that you don't want your mother hearing about. My brother did, and he really caught it from my mom!" After any sharing with a teacher, the child should go away liking himself better than he had when he stopped to speak with her.

Another, and fourth, ingredient for freeing children from a prescribed genre or topic when writing is wide experiencing of literature. The children need easy access to all kinds of books. This comes within the teacher's responsibility. Collect books to have in your room from the school library and from the public library as well as your own and the children's. Read to your children daily — whether they're five-year olds or twelves. Vocabulary, syntax, and style are so easily picked up during these pleasurable times. Poetry can be a part of each day, especially if verses are in your head so that rummaging around for a book isn't necessary. "John had great big waterproof boots on..." while waiting for the buses to be called on a rainy day; "Has any one seen my mouse? ..." between subjects while materials are being put away and others assembled; " 'Well, son, I'll tell you:/Life for me ain't been no crystal stair,'..." to gather attention at the beginning of a social studies lesson. If you like poetry, and will allow yourself the luxury of learning it by heart to share with your children, you are a living demonstration that verse *is* important. Pleasure for the individual who learns it can be gained during memorization — for it's so easy when you like the piece. Sharing it with others is excitingly delightful.

No discussion of meaning or style of the literature ever originates with the teacher. A child may question or comment, the teacher listens with interest and with non-verbal cues invited others to react to the child's remark. You might support the child who says, "I can almost feel the snow blowing and cushioning my feet," with "Yes, velvet

shoes would give me that feeling." When a way-out comment comes such as, "And people snore at night," during a discussion of "The Jabberwocky", a slow nod and steady eye contact with, "Yes, they do," might help elicit a tie-in by the child with the current topic. At least he's not put down. After school that day you might recall a conversation that had taken place half an hour before the discussion of the verse about a movie on sounds of the night. The child had been digesting his thoughts about that film and from it had finally produced his only comment for that session. He hasn't benefited much from your spot of verse but he has experienced some acceptance from verbalizing his slowly developed thoughts on the movie. Now he is free to pick up on the topic currently under discussion.

Continued stories, sequences read daily after lunch, are highlights for both you and your upper grade children. Language skillfully used in good literature evokes laughter, anxiety, security, excitement. You never have to mention this phenomenon because the children laugh together at some episodes, sit on the edges of their chairs and beg you to read on when you have to stop at a cliff-hanger; and relax and feel comfortably secure during other passages. Sometimes the tissue box makes its rounds, with you grabbing the first paper hankie. These literature sessions come to fruition when children share their own stories and a child says, "Oh, you made me see Uncle Bear just like Robert Lawson made me see Georgie's uncle in *Rabbit Hill!*" Or perhaps after you've felt a tinge of tears at a child's description of a loss or departure, you might say with complete sincerity, "Ah, like 'A little bit sad about the place you are leaving. A little bit glad about the place you are going,' " and the class will recall with nostalgia McCloskey's *Time of Wonder*. When a child uses *elegant* for the first time you know of the day after listening to Lucinda in *Roller Skates,* you know vocabulary is building.

This casual use of literature as a stimulus for writing assumes a rich oral composition program — a chance for children, if *they* want to, to develop endings for stories, tell their own fables, describe *vividly* a sight or smell. Drama should be recognized as ever present, with you slipping in and out of roles, with the children encouraged to do likewise. The squirming child disrupting those around him during the study of rockets can be effectively disciplined by the teacher/head-astronaut announcing that highly trained astronauts have too much to do to take time to disrupt the busy men and women working around him!

Children who can produce oral dialogue may be better prepared to write it than those who are tongue tied when finding themselves in role. This drama takes place in and out of all subjects. The head mathematician is trying to find a check to use for multiplication. "Can any of you mathematicians help me find a way of checking

these multiplication computations? Do we have any books that might help? Do any of you know of any way of checking these?" Words like multiplier and multiplicand are going to take on importance that they never held in the simple computation of a product. Children will need to talk like professional mathematicians, i.e., use technical language. This prepares for more formal writing.

Finally, the most obvious remedy for the disaster following, "And if you do write you can write about anything you want to," is to have a central theme each day. A picture, recording, film, filmstrip, field trip, playground argument, or a new form of verse. Those children who don't have an urgent need to write about something in particular and this may be 95 percent of them, usually, or may for a while welcome a suggestion, a starter. Yesterday's picture is still up and last Wednesday's psychedelic design is there, too, in case today's recordings of "The Classical Symphony" or of Nikki Giovanni reading her poetry says nothing to them. The child who has just discovered her divorced mother is having an affair with Uncle Ted, may have some very important writing to do. For days, you may see her sit, scribbling and staring into space — with nothing shared with you. This is when you go home aching to know, to comfort — yet knowing you are completely impotent. This is the waiting game. When she finally does start to share again, no comment can be made on your observations. Your willingness to listen, to wait for her next comment — your sensitivity to what she is dealing with — will guide her to recognize you as a possible source of support. Frequently we muff these opportunities at the beginning. Our timing is bad. We're too eager to help; too naive to truly understand what the child feels; too sentimental to suppport what seems to be an unsupportable situation. We can only learn by trying. This trying must be with our whole selves — nothing superficial — no thought of telling it at breakfast or over coffee the next day. We commit ourselves completely to hearing this child; hearing what this fellow human says and feeling all the big gaps where our experience and understanding desert us. We'll be about this the rest of our lives — if we dare!

Avoid showing pleasure with the child who uses your suggested writing topics any more obviously than with the one who always has his own ideas to develop. The child who still needs a suggested topic hasn't developed a strong center within himself. At what age should this develop? Does anyone know? I feel the development of an independent inner core is to be desired, but I would not be anxious about the fifth grader who still needed suggested topics each time for his writings any more than I would feel something was wrong with the first grader who wasn't learning to read. Perhaps the child who needs a given topic for writing always knows how to occupy himself when he's home alone on a rainy Saturday afternoon. I'm just not there to see that! His next year's teacher may be the one to feel the satisfaction from his becoming a self-motivated writer.

When working with a certain writing technique, say cinquain, you notice that the first time you introduce it, Suzie, among others, doesn't try it. Neither does she try the second nor the third times. Notice what she does instead of trying out new techniques to see how her activities compare to those done when a story or a picture has been used to trigger writing. If you feel comfortable to ask Suzie how she feels about cinquain, fine. Do so. You may learn something about Suzie, cinquain, children, or poetry. You may not. Suzie can live a rich life even without one experience with cinquain. If she feels you want her to write one, she might write to oblige you and never write another. Otherwise, at the age of 60 while working in her garden she may remember the pattern, not its terminology, and jot something down for her own pleasure. Teachng is an art full of delayed, sometimes missed, gratifications.

"You Needn't Share..."

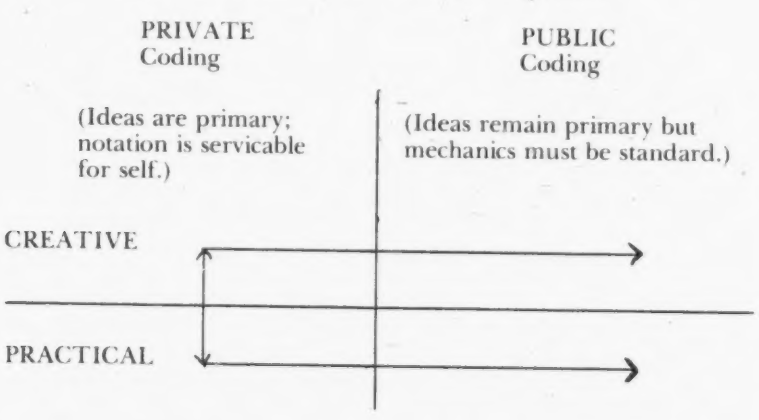
The final support for the no-red-pencil program, to the tell the children they don't need to show anyone their creations if they don't want to, has a good rationale behind it. This statement is to guard against the well-meaning teacher that I was when I read a story that John had written. He was mechanically talented and he wrote about his brother's hot rod. I was excited when John produced this story because he was not a prolific writer. I read it over his shoulder as he finished. "Do read that to the class!" (This was before Wilt and Burrows.) He didn't think he would. It wasn't very good. "Oh, yes it is, John. You must read it." We block out unpleasantries so I don't remember exactly what happened but I think I probably commandeered it and read it to the class. The horrible things this taught John about school in general and me in particular! He learned his impotence against teachers. He learned his judgment was not considered. He may have thought, "Hm, if Acheson thinks *that's* good she has lousy taste," or even "Hm, she *couldn't* think that's any good; she must be an out-and-out hypocrite." Whatever he learned was undesirable.

Perhaps, however, John liked this piece of writing, too. But sometimes, to appear successful, to be in the limelight of praise is too much for an individual. He probably would have been happy to write this for his own satisfaction with no one else reading it. Even if he had wanted my approbation, he communicated nothing to me about wanting his peers' comments. On the other hand, he might very much have wanted to share with them. If this was so, he needed to develop the mechanics for requesting a hearing. He needed to learn to be responsible for reading his own work. These experiences I denied him. In this instance I don't believe he wanted his story shared; I don't remember any other piece of writing coming from John.

Your first free-sharing time might start slowly. If the children are reluctant to read their work before the whole class, encourage them to quietly read their work to each other informally. Save a few minutes at the end of this sharing for children, now buoyed up by their neighbor's appreciation, ready to read their work, to share with the whole group. Or perhaps a neighbor would like a selection so well he'll urge the writer to let him read it to the class. However you get things started, children will quickly feel the pleasure of writing stories or articles for their class to enjoy. At first you will be needed as an avid, appreciative listener with a ready comment on the plot or content at the end. Eventually the children just need each other.

"This all seems fine for 'creative' writing," you're thinking. "But how are the children to learn the mechanics of writing? When and how am I to get them to correct and rewrite their papers?" Look at this diagram:

A Duodichotomy for Written Composition



All this says is that all writing that is private coding is written to be read by only the writer and maybe one or two of his confidants who read his idiocoding easily and charitably (you as his teacher; his friend with whom he shares ideas; and perhaps his mother if she can appreciate his id as and not get anxious about lack of perfection in writing mechanics). Because this draft is for private consumption, mechanics are of minor importance; the ideas are what the writer is focusing his attention on.

The writer may read from this private coding to his classmates to get feedback on his ideas and style. All writing we do, whether

it ends up as a public document or as a grocery list to remind us what to pick up as we walk along the supermarket aisles, starts out as private coding. The more widely read or formal a piece of writing is to become, the more necessary it is to have this rough draft to build from. Its purpose is to catch the ephemeral ideas — to trap them on paper before they are lost. Later, if others are to read what has been written, careful editing can transform the private coding into public coding.

Burrows, *et al.* suggest this editing takes place only on occasions when there is a desire on the child's part for an outside reader to deal with his message: a letter of invitation, a request for materials, a lost and found notice. Other people must decode these messages so standard punctuation, capitalization, spelling and sentence and paragraph formation are obviously necessary. Editing to standardize the notation of these messages takes on meaning where rewriting of paragraphs aimed at nobody is a waste of time.

Your time that was formerly spent "correcting" stories is now spent discovering useful writing situations, watching skits when invited, listening to stories and poems children want to share with you, and developing interest centers which children will interact with and add to.

Delight in your children's compositions — oral and written. Deal with their ideas all the time; their mechanics *only* when an "outsider" needs to understand him. Enjoy your no-red-pencil composition program and your children.

[1]Alvina Treut Burrows, Doris C. Jackson and Dorothy Saunders, **They All Want to Write** (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).
[2]Herbert R. Kohl, **The Open Classroom: a practical guide to a new way of teaching**, (New York: Vintage Books, 1970).

Push It Around and Think About It

James F. Symula

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"But I don't know what you want!" How many times have we as English teachers heard our students make this statement or one similar to it. The above statement is a euphemism for such comments as "Boy, is this assignment dumb!" or "Tell me what you want so I can get this composition out of the way!" or "What do I have to write in order to get a good mark?" or "What kind of game is he playing now?" This last comment probably best sums up what goes on in many English classrooms when it comes to writing. We are playing a game with the students, but it is a game which the vast majority of students always lose. They lose because they are expected to be creative in forty-two minutes. They lose because the writing assignment must be done "right" the first time — there are no second chances. They lose because we as teachers are not interested in the process of writing. We are only interested in the product; and if the product is poor, then the student must change it to meet our standards or suffer the consequences of a poor grade.

Among the students who graduate from high school, there is a disturbingly large number who have not really learned how to write. They have, instead, learned how to play a game called writing. The game is really quite simple, but the rules must be adhered to at all times, else the players will be disqualified. Some of the rules do change (with the change of teachers), but essentially the game is played as follows:

THE WRITING GAME

1. Time limit — 42 minutes
2. Obtain a creative topic from your teacher
3. Make an outline. Time limit — 5 minutes
4. Write rough draft. (This may be difficult for the first paper because you do not know what the teacher wants.) Time limit — 15 minutes

5. Proof-read. (Look for mechanical and structural errors only. Do not change your idea because time is an important factor.)
6. Write final copy. (Use ink and only write on one side of the paper.) Time limit — 15 minutes
7. Proof-read (just in case). Time limit — 2 minutes
8. Scoring. Points are deducted for errors as indicated below

SPELLING ERRORS (Sp)

1 Sp	— Deduct 3 points
2 Sp's	— Deduct 5 points
3 — 6 Sp's	— Deduct 6 points for each three errors
6 — 10 Sp's	— Deduct 9 points for each three errors. However, if student agrees to write the words in his notebook, only deduct 7 points for each group of three errors.
10 or more Sp's	— Deduct 15 points unless student is willing to write out each word ten times and hand them in. In this case only deduct 11 1/2 points.

RUN ON SENTENCES (RO)

1 or 2 RO's	— Deduct 5 points each
3 or more RO's	— Disqualification

SENTENCE FRAGMENTS (Frag)

Same as Run On Sentences

AWKWARD CONSTRUCTIONS (AWK)

1 Awk	— Deduct 2 points
2 Awk's	— Deduct 7 1/2 points
3 or more Awk's	— Disqualification

AGREEMENT

Pronoun and Antecedent — Deduct 3 points for each error

Subject and Verb — Deduct 4 1/2 points for each error

MISCELLANEOUS

For punctuation and capitalization errors points should be deducted at discression of the teacher.

BONUS POINTS

Bonus points may be added for the following:

Finishing Early	— Add 1/2 point for each minute under the time limit
Neatness	— Add 2 points
Margins	— Add 1 point per margin
Heading	— Add 1 1/2 points for proper heading

As ludicrous as the Writing Game appears, it is essentially the same kind of game that we force many of the students in our English classes to play when we ask them to write creatively. Many of us have collected hundreds of titles and topics which the students may use as subjects for their writing assignments. There are many spontaneous writing assignments which come about as a result of class discussion, and we constantly encourage students to write about subjects of their own choosing. Yet, with all of the freedom of choice that we offer, we still insist that they complete the assignment on a designated day during a regularly scheduled English class. As a result many students write with little more than the ends of their pens.

The practice of placing a time limit on student writing is not at all surprising if we stop to consider the setting within which it takes place. The overall school day is run on a time schedule. Classes, bus schedules, free periods, assemblies, lunch programs, classroom tests, regents, and standardized tests all have time limits placed on them. Many school systems are now using computers to do more things efficiently in a shorter period of time. (About the only thing that is not controlled by a time limit is the afterschool faculty meeting.) It seems very natural, therefore, to try and fit our composition work into this time schedule. Time and creativity, however, are not compatible! We can not give students a topic to write about and expect them to do a thorough job in a specified amount of time. They need time to push it around and think about it. They need time to discuss it with peers and adults. They need time to write and rewrite until *they* are satisfied with what they have written. It should be our job as teachers to find and develop ways to give them that time.

One of the first things that we have to do, then, is convince the students that we are sincere about giving them time to write. One way of accomplishing this might be by asking them to keep a journal. Except for the stipulation that they should put something into the journal each day, there should be no restrictions placed on this activity. They should feel free to put anything they want into their journal. You might give them suggestions such as the following:

1. Cut out a newspaper or magazine article which interests you.
2. If you hear of any interesting event on the news, feel free to write about it.
3. If you watch a TV program, write about why you liked (or didn't like) the show.
4. If you have a happy, sad, frustrating, funny or interesting experience, write about it.
5. Write about your ideas about current affairs: how you feel about an election, what improvements you hope to see in the town, county, state, and country.
6. How do you feel about things at school? Do you favor "open classes"? Are there any clubs you'd like to see initiated?
7. If you find an interesting poem, or if you write a poem, include it.

It should be stated at the outset that there will be *no* grades given for the journal. The only responsibility the teacher has is that of collecting them periodically and reacting to them. The teacher reaction is crucial if we are serious about encouraging students to write. The reactions should be positive and personal, and the students' writing should be treated as privileged communication.

Another way of giving students time to write is through the use of "stream of consciousness" writing. One approach that has been used successfully in the classroom is to ask the students to write steadily for five minutes. They are instructed to put down on paper whatever comes into their minds. If they run out of things to write about, they are to keep rewriting the last word they wrote until they think of something else to write. After the five minutes are up ask them to read and react to what they have written. This may be done with the entire class, small groups, or in pairs. After a brief discussion have each student choose one idea, word, or statement that he has written and write it on a piece of paper. They are to take it with them to think about for the next day.

At the beginning of the next class give the students five minutes to list all the thoughts they can about the idea, word, or statement which they wrote on the paper the day before. Collect the papers and encourage the class to keep thinking about their topics. The same procedure should be followed the next day also. This can be done two or three times after which all of the papers are handed back, and the students are asked to take them home, organize their ideas, and write about them. When they are finished they can bring their writings to class and, if they choose, read them and get peer reaction — again this may be done in large group, small group or in pairs. If, after peer reactions, they decide to change their papers in any way, they should be given time to do so.

A technique similar to the stream of consciousness writing is what we might call "question brainstorming." In this situation we are asking the students what kinds of questions we can ask about a particular idea or object. In order to illustrate this in the classroom you might, for example, borrow a student's shoe, and ask the class what kinds of questions they can ask about the shoe. As they ask the questions, list them on the board. After they have exhausted the possibilities, ask them to organize the questions into areas of similarity. In this manner it is possible to arrange a composition paragraph by paragraph in the classroom. After this is done, the students can choose a topic of their own, take it home, and use the question brainstorming technique to organize their ideas for writing. They should again be given time in class to pursue their ideas with their peers and teacher before and after they write.

The above approaches are merely suggestions for writing. What they have in common is that they are designed to give the student the time to think, to write, to discuss, and to rewrite. The need for time to write cannot be too strongly emphasized. If we stop to consider what we are asking a student to do when we ask him to write, his task seems almost insurmountable. Bruce Miller in the October 1968 *English Journal* /Bruce Miller, "On Composition as Art," *English Journal,* LVIII (October 1968), 1017-1019./ points out that when we ask a student to write:

> We are asking him in the first place to call up a large fund of information — about lexicography, social convention, rhetoric, grammar, spelling, euphony, logic — and then we are asking him to bring all that to bear in a creative effort. In other words, we are asking him to be an artist for the nonce.

In addition to all of the problems that Miller mentions, the student is also faced with grading and all of its attendant psychoses and neuroses.

The one thing that the student does not need is a time limit. As was stated earlier, many of us have hundreds of topics and

approaches for writing. What we should be doing is looking for ways to use these topics and approaches under less stringent time restrictions. What this ultimately means is that something has to go. It may mean skipping a number of sections in the anthology; it may mean teaching fewer grammar lessons; or it may mean a complete reordering of our own personal priorities. But whatever the cost, if we can provide more time for our students to write, maybe they will no longer write with just the ends of their pens; and hopefully they may no longer say, "But I don't know what you want!"

Using the "Open Concept" In Freshman English

Nancy Sandberg

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"Open Concept" is a philosophy of education that began in the British Infant School and was based on research by Piaget, Montessori, Lady Plowden, Maslow, Moustakas, and others.[1] The idea of open concept education is that learning occurs best when the learner is *active* rather than passive. For example, educators using the open concept approach in the field of English believe that schools must teach students how to use a library, a dictionary, the *Reader's Guide,* and how to interview people. Open concept educators believe that students should not be required to memorize birth and death dates of famous authors and literary events but should be taught to check Benet's *The Reader's Encyclopedia* for that kind of data. Open educators accept the fact that though a student once earned "A's" in Latin, he probably will not be able to write a paragraph of Latin nor translate a passage of Latin ten years later. They say that learning the process of *how* to seek answers is what is important. They believe that the process of seeking answers must be integrated in the regular class period.

They reject the concept that memorizing a large number of facts is the way to knowledge, because, they assert, "facts" change; for example, the fact that houses are put together with nails has changed since the development of concrete block houses and prefabricated houses — one using mortar; the other, rivets.

Open concept educators believe in a flexible educational system because all too often the educational "facts" they once took for granted prove to be wrong — as in the case of the infallibility of grades. They cite the 1912 study by Starch and Elliott which questioned the reliability of grades for measuring accomplishments of pupils.[2] The goal in the study was "to discover how much personal values and expectations of individual teachers influence their grading standards."[3] Two hundred English teachers graded two freshman high school papers according to their usual standards. A passing score

was 75. For one paper, scores varied from 64 to 98 points; the other paper had a range from 50 to 97. Fearing the unreliability of objective grading by English teachers, Starch and Elliott repeated the study using a geometry paper and geometry teachers as subjects. The range of grades on one geometry paper was 67 points, a low of 28 and a high of 95. The question raised by the study was that if grades were important to a student and if a student's work was so variously judged by professional teachers, should not something be done to "ensure that these wide variations in grading practices be eliminated."[4]

Other "facts" and assumptions about learning have been opened to question by various writers who have been dissatisfied with the traditional approach. Dissatisfactions have been expressed by a host of writers including John Holt, Herbert Kohl, Jonathan Kozol, George Dennison, Paul Goodman, and Charles Silberman.[5] These dissatisfactions were summarized by Postman and Weingarten in *Teaching as a Subversive Activity:6*

> The institution we call school is what it is because we made it that way. If it is irrelevant, as Marshall McLuhan says; if it shields children from reality, as Norbert Wiener says; if it educates for obsolescence, as John Gardner says; if it does not develop intelligence, as Jerome Bruner says; if it is based on fear as John Holt says; if it avoids the promotion of significant learnings, as Carl Rogers says; if it punishes creativity and independence as Edgar Friedenberg says; if, in short, it is not doing what needs to be done, it can be changed, it must be changed.

Traditional education was exclusively teacher centered, authoritarian; it had a prescribed curriculum; mistakes were considered sinful; feelings were generally overlooked; the classroom atmosphere was formal. Pupils sat in rows, for the teacher instructed the entire class at one time. Learning was primarily through memory. There was a lock-step advancement based on achievement testing.

Open education takes that approach and builds onto it. It expands possibilities; it extends learning opportunities; it emphasizes the uniqueness of people — it nurtures a flowering of individuality.

Open concept is easiest to describe physically. Open concept educators believe that we learn through our senses — all our senses, not just listening. To provide for learning through all the senses, open concept teachers of English might provide a room rich with materials and equipment. There would be the usual textbooks covering a variety of themes such as "War," "Love," or "Loneliness" in fiction and non-fiction; but rather than all students reading the same text, each student may have a copy of a different text that has different thematic selections. The multi-text approach also allows for differing abilities in reading so that in one Freshman English class there may

be books suitable to the ability of a tenth grader, a senior in college, and one for an "average" Freshman English student.

There would be several books on how to write a term paper and copies of past student term papers with rough drafts and note cards available for inspection. There might be a box of pictures clipped from old magazines to serve as stimulus for writing or as parts of a collage explicating a poem. The pictures might also be used to demonstrate visually "the scene I liked the most" from a short story or novel recently read. There would be things hanging from the ceiling such as a jar containing Salada teabag quotes ("Most wives try to change a man's habits — then complain he's not the man she married" or "Quite often it is the things you don't do that you regret the most") which might serve as stimulus for two or three students to hold a discussion or there might be several mobiles centered on topics such as "Things soft" or "Things that remind me of e. e. cummings." There might be huge posters in production, attractively advertising a reading to be held next Tuesday afternoon and followed by a discussion for those interested. There would be cabinets to store glue, scissors, construction paper, bits of material for collages, blank tapes, blank film, crayons, colored pencils. There would be calendar charts listing dates for student presentations or special film showings either at the college or in the local community. There would be film projectors and overhead projectors and film splicers and slide projectors and video tape machines and tape recorders and headsets — all to encourage students to try alternative expressions of language. In other words, the environment would be set up to encourage learning and to motivate varieties of responses to literature.

In open concept there is heavy emphasis on education through many materials generally found in an art class for there is a belief that art work encourages use of many senses. The student in Freshman English might be interested in doing a project on old people. She might take pictures of several old people at one time at one of their SMILE (Service to Manchester's Ill, Lonely, and Elderly) parties and make a scrapbook for them or include the picture in a letter she writes at their dictation and sends home to a grandchild. She might write and illustrate a poem about her feelings on working with old people. She might make decorations for a party for the old people. She might write an article for the local newspaper on what was happening at the old folks' home. She might encourage the old people to try simple art tasks such as making masks for the local orphanage at Halloween.

At all times the approach of working on traditional skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the English class would be meaningful to the students and would grow naturally out of their own selections of topics. Another student might choose to do a semes-

ter's project on prisons. Perhaps he would volunteer to work several hours a week in the local "Industrial School" that houses juvenile delinquents. Perhaps he would try to find books or magazines that would interest the students or would help them with their homework and keep a written or taped journal of his activities. Perhaps he would do taped interviews with the "Big Brother" group from the college that goes to the Industrial School weekly. Perhaps he would read official information explaining the role of the Industrial School. Maybe he would visit and write up his interview with an industrial school in Massachusetts. The goal would be to have the English skills be real experience tasks.

Open education encourages use of many materials for individual or group learning. There might be individualized programmed learning materials for working on grammar problems or vocabulary skills. There might be sets of "Task Cards" that are coded to go with specific readings. The cards might ask basic questions such as: Who is the main character? What kind of a person is he? Defend your assertions with evidence from the story. What does the critic in Contemporary American literature say about this story? Do you agree? The student would fill out answers to the questions in written form.

Students might work in various group arrangements. The girl doing the drawing of the house and a write-up of the process might work with a friend. A group of six might make an animated film as summation of their series of readings on the theme of anger. A group of four interested in writing poetry might have a mini-festival and invite the local sixth grade poets in to share a reading of work. The poetry festival might conclude with the group writing haiku together. A group of six might try improvisational drama as a way of understanding literature. They might read a scene from a play and then close the book and talk about that scene. They might then see if they have any personal associations with that scene. They might then reread the scene, close the books, and talk out the scene. Next, they might try putting actions to their words. The scene in its final presentation form would not have to be the exact words of the author but could be a loose interpretation done by the students.

Instead of standing up in front of a class of thirty and reciting a speech in a formal way, students might make puppets and practice speech-making through the voice of the puppet — a less threatening activity. They might properly bind books for their collection of favorite short stories they have Xeroxed or poems they have written themselves or provocative non-fiction articles they have collected and on which they have written commentaries.

Open concept educators also believe in extending the environment for study beyond the classroom. Physically this might mean

students would leave the building and pursue projects in the community as suggested by the editor of *Yellow Pages of Learning Resources.* For example, editor Richard Saul Wurman lists suggestions on things that can be learned from a bakery or a museum or a newspaper. The student might use this paperback as a starter to learn how to use resources in his immediate environment.

There are also some less tangible changes English educators using the open concept model can make in the classroom environment. Dr. Madeline Hunter of New York University observed in a film lecture that one cannot make a student learn. However, a teacher can manipulate the student's environment. She suggested that the teacher can change the environment so that a student will be more apt to learn. She suggested the following variables which educators could change:

1. Anxiety level — set the pace so that it is just ahead of the student.

2. Feeling tones — establish pleasant feeling tones, for these generate the most learning.

3. Interest level — Direct students to find areas of interest to them, since motivation follows interest.

4. Success — Control the level of success by controlling the level of difficulty.

5. Knowledge of results — Give adequate feedback to enable students to know how they are doing.

The open concept, because it does have so many resources and multi-texts, must be well organized. There must be a regular record-keeping system established and maintained by both teacher and students. The teacher may keep a portfolio on each student — a representative sample of the student's critiques on plays seen, a sample of her early journal writing, a notation of the progress of her project, an account of several individual conferences, an explanation of her internship work associated with her project. Teacher and student would then meet in periodic tutorial sessions to discuss the scope and direction of the student's work.

The final presentation of a body of work may be handled in several ways. The two who worked on the house model might give a lecture-demonstration to a local "House and Gardens" group; a student working on personal development might ask others to join her in some "self knowledge" encounter activities and discuss the experience afterwards; students reading literature might act out a

favorite scene for observers. Each student might be requested to hand in a completed portfolio summarizing the problem worked on, the methods used, and the final outcome.

The goal in the open concept classroom should be to help students gain the skills to develop their own talents. They should gain the skills that help them select and follow through projects of their own choosing. Contemporary literature in 1973 will not be contemporary in 1983. Students should learn how to find a new book, how to find critical materials on that book, how to make critical comments on that book. The Japanese proverb presents it this way:

> If you give a man a fish, you feed him for one day. If you show a man how to fish, you feed him for many, many days.

The open concept educator can provide for those many days — whatever the student's final choice. Let the English teacher begin to find ways to open out the options for students and help them to be more perceptive and critical in their use of language.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Jean Piaget, **The Child's Conception of the World,** trans. by Jean and Andrew Tomlinson, Littlfield, 1965; Maria Montessori, **Spontaneous Activity in Education,** Schocken, c. 1965; Abraham Maslow, **Toward a Psychology of Being,** Van Nostrand, c. 1968; Moustakas, Clark, **The Authentic Teacher,** Doyle, c. 1966.
[2]Howard Kirschenbaum, Sidney B. Simon, Rodney W. Napier, **Wad-Ja-Get?,** Hart, 1971, p. 54.
[3]**Ibid.,** p. 54.
[4]**Ibid.,** p. 57.
[5]John Holt, **How Children Fail,** Dell, 1964; Herbert Kohl, **36 Children,** Signet, 1967; Charles E. Silberman; **Crisis in the Classroom,** Random House, 1970.
[6]Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, **Teaching as a Subversive Activity,** Delacorte, 1969, p. xiv.

The Literary Response Process of College Students

Richard Beach

Richard Beach is Assistant Prof[illegible] of Education, University of Minnesota and co-author with Alan C. P[illegible]es of Literature and the Reader: Research on Response to Literature, [illegible]ading Interests, *and* Teaching of Literature.

We know little about how students think while reading literature or about how they translate covert thoughts into public response. Their public response in a discussion, for example, may be similar to or quite different than their previous thoughts while reading.

Many procedures in literature instruction — discussion questions, critical essays, tests, etc. — accentuate the differences between what might be called private and public response. In many academic situations, the student is obligated to respond according to the teacher's dictates or those of a discussion group, dictates which involve consideration of rhetorical persuasiveness, logical reasoning, teacher's expectations, etc.

Of course, many students need to translate or order their amorphous private thoughts to communicate these thoughts publicly. Some students may not wish to express any of their thoughts, or, if they do, they may want to express responses which do not violate the particular nature of their experience with the work. However, students often perceive a distinction between their own private experience with the work and what they must say publicly about a work in class. For example, if a teacher stresses factual recall questions, a rehash of "what happened," the students' complex affective experience with the work is not considered. Students may be reluctant to state affective responses because the instructor has treated such responses, directly or indirectly, as somehow irrelevant to "understanding" the work.

Students are also thinking about other students in the classroom. When they conceive of the classroom as a competitive arena for "impression management," then they may be reluctant to verbalize responses which fail to "impress." This results in careful rehearsal for potential classroom performance, undermining intrinsic enjoyment of the work.

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As a result of these considerations many students begin to perceive

their responses in the literature class, what might be called their "public response," as foreign to their literary experience with the work, their conscious and subconscious "private response."

There are many classrooms where this is not the case. Teachers in these classrooms appreciate the complexity of the "private response" and attempt to nurture that process rather than channel it according to one homogeneous format.

Unfortunately, we know little of the complexity of private response. We can only theorize about the myriad processes of engagement, identification, self-awareness, etc. which occur while reading. Much of the previous research on literary response has used measurement devices — critical essays or oral interviews — which involve recollected summarizations according to certain set criteria. For example, the critical essay implies certain matters of form — ordering responses according to some logical progression with appropriate transitions and conclusions and proper "proof."

This article summarizes a study of students' thoughts while reading using a different measurement device.[1] The purpose of this study was to compare the differences between students' private and public responses. This was done by eliciting and coding the students' free-association responses on successive re-readings of a poem and then comparing these responses to their responses in an unstructured group discussion about the same poem. It was assumed in this study that "thinking aloud" on tape or writing down their thoughts would approximate the subjects' usual thinking while reading poetry. Because this study could be described as "naturalistic" and adhered to no strict design, no hypotheses were formulated.

The study was also concerned with the effect of completing the free-association assignments on the group discussions. In other words, does extensive thinking about a poem beforehand affect a subjects' participation in a discussion? If so, in what ways? Thus, in this study, transcripts of discussions by subjects who had completed the free-association assignments beforehand were compared with transcipts of discussions by subjects who were merely asked to read a poem once.

A related question in the study was whether subjects would extend their previous thoughts about the poem in the context of the discussions or merely restate these thoughts, the assignment thereby serving as a substitute for, rather than a stimulus to discussion. Some of the findings suggest ways to improve the quality of discussion in literature classes.

The subjects in this study were 36 junior and senior English majors at the University of Illinois who were members of the same

class. They were randomly divided into three groups. In the first "run" of the experiment, subjects in one group were given a short contemporary poem[2] and a tape cassette and were instructed to record all of their thoughts while reading the poem, continuing for each re-reading of the poem for the period of an hour. Subjects in the second group received the same poem with instructions to write down their thoughts. The third group was told to read the poem once.

All three groups then discussed this poem in their group for one 45-minute class period. With a second poem[3], the three groups were rotated so that the groups received different assignments and then rotated again with a third poem.[4] This rotation system controlled for effects of between-group differences.

Each subject's assignment and discussion responses were coded using a slight modification of response categories designed by Alan C. Purves.[5] The categories were: (1) Engagement: the reader's affective response, his manner of experiencing the work; (2) Perception: the description of the events, characters, structure of the work viewed as an object distinct from the reader; (3) Interpretation: the attempt to find meaning in certain aspects of the work, to generalize or draw inferences about characters, symbols, etc.; (4) Interpretation of the whole: overall interpretation of the poem; (5) Evaluation: responses about the quality of the work; (6) Autobiographical digression: references to the subject's own life; and (7) General digression: references to other works and writers, unclassifiable responses, filler, etc. Each "statement" of response — any group of words separated by punctuation — was placed in one of these categories and the percentages for each subject's responses were determined, in addition to mean percentages for each group.

Results and discussion of results

The combined mean percentages for all three groups indicated no major differences in responses due to differences in the three poems.

What were the differences between the subjects' private responses and discussion responses? The subjects tended to respond in the discussions as they had on the assignments. (According to the percentages based on coding using the Purves categories.)

One reason for this is that subjects often restated their previous thoughts; their discussion responses were a carbon copy of their assignment responses. This may have been due to the unstructured nature of the discussions — students could restate their previous thoughts without translating them in order to "fit" the teacher's questions.

One positive feature was that subjects were not inhibited in re-expressing their earlier engagement responses.

The assignment and discussion responses were also similar because subjects exhibited a relatively consistent strategy regardless of differences in poems, assignment tasks (tape or written), or discussions. In other words, they tended to employ a consistent cognitive style in responding to the poems.

There were some minor differences between the assignment and discussion responses. The assignment responses made more reference to specifics in the poem, particularly in the initial readings, while the discussion responses consisted of some summary statements, a recapitulation of responses appropriate for the drift of the discussion. When the discussion limited itself to particular response modes, subjects would jettison or retain assignment responses according to this emphasis. Some of the discussions were able to break new ground in going beyond restated assignment responses. This often depended on their attitude: whether group members were willing to collaborate and collectively build on their responses or whether each merely restated his assignment responses without the desire to collaborate.

The continuous talking-aloud or writing down of responses on the assignments provided an experience which could be recalled more easily than thoughts from only one reading. The assignment tended to force an overt formulation and organization of subjects' thoughts. Moreover, the free-association generated certain affective states — the subjects were aware of how they felt while reading by noting their associations between these states and the poem. They could then recall these moods in their discussion, providing examples of response in which the reader is simultaneously engaged with the work but also aware of how he is engaged.

The results also indicated that the subjects passed through certain stages of response, beginning in initial readings and developing on into later readings and then into the discussion. For example, the data indicated a similar percentage of autobiographical digression responses for all subjects on assignments and also a similar decrease from assignment to discussion. In the discussion following only a single reading, subjects began at approximately the same percentage of autobiographical digression as did the other subjects on their assignments. In other words, once the subjects had passed through some initial autobiographical stage on their assignments, they didn't continue this stage in discussion; while subjects in their initial responses in the discussion needed some time to explore autobiographical response.

The general direction of these response stages tended to begin

with perception, move to engagement and autobiographical digression, then to interpretation and evaluation, and then to general digression and interpretation of the whole; the later stages building on responses from previous stages. This suggests that subjects needed to organize some of the "facts" before interpretation could occur.

In this study, a higher percentage of engagement response occurred than in similar studies on literary responses of college students. Morris (1971)[6], and Wilson (1964)[7] found a higher percentage of interpretation than on this study and a lower percentage of engagement. This may have been due to the fact that Morris used an oral interview technique and Wilson, a written essay measurement, while the free-association tasks in this study may have engendered more engagement. While we may never know how people actually respond to literature and thus verify the validity of one measurement technique over another, these differences suggest that people vary their response strategies according to different contexts: if the teacher wants interpretation on an essay, the student responds accordingly. Future research might study the effects of conformity of response in various contexts.

Do these contexts hinder the student's development of his own unique strategy, a strategy he can trust as opposed to a strategy he borrows from teachers or critics?

The responses within the groups were determined primarily by response strategies developed on the assignment and consistently carried over into the discussion. However, various group pressures did influence the responses in each of the discussion.

The fact that the discussions were unstructured meant that each group would need to decide collectively on a mutual response strategy; some groups were more successful at this than others. The group's attitude towards the poems and the task varied considerably, the form or format dictating the range of possible response options.

The initial responses in each of the discussions often established a sense of direction. When subjects honestly admitted basic misundertanding, reading problems, or affective responses, an attitude of openness and collaboration was established — the group was willing to cope with one another's personal problems and differences rather than rush to some superficial "instant interpretation." For example, one subject expressed much difficulty in basic reading comprehension; when other subjects replied to her questions, they not only had to clarify and simplify their own thoughts (for her sake) but they also had to cooperate with her and others. In contrast, when subjects merely perceived the discussion as a platform to restate their assignment responses, the result was a series of monologues.

When subjects could pinpoint their initial reading problems, as in "I'm not sure this person left this small town with Berky, left this small town /by himself/ or if she's still there or what," then other members of the discussion could follow up because the problem was clear. The free association assignment seemed to help subjects recognize initial problems in understanding the poems. Subjects often found that their first reading was superficial or that different readings produced conflicting interpretations, and they could bring this particular problem to the group. The usual classroom practice of one reading followed by summary analysis often discourages a thorough perception and expression of misunderstandings. When the prevailing attitude in a group is "lets try to decide the meaning as quickly as possible," then expressions of misunderstanding may be viewed as unnecessary interruptions.

Subjects would also begin discussions with the need to clarify "the facts" — perception responses. This was often a prerequisite to interpretation. Again, this contrasts with teacher-led discussions which begin on a more abstract level: "What do you think this poem is saying," etc., which may discourage a breaking-in stage of perception response.

Another opening strategy was to imply certain potential strategies, as, for example, in initially conceiving of the poem as a puzzle. The implied problem for the group was that of fitting together the different parts of the poem and arriving at some final solution, which tended to encourage more perception/interpretation responses.

Another characteristic of the discussions was the emergence of various leaderhip roles — subjects would assume substitute teacher/leader roles consistently for three discussions.

One of these roles was that of the "informed critic/teacher," who, having invested much effort in "preparation for class" (completing the assignment) developed what he or she believed to be a sophisticated interpretation of the poem for the enlightenment of the group. Comparison of such subjects' assignment and discussion responses indicated that they would essentially restate their assignment interpretations with little consideration for group concerns. The stance implied to others in the group was: "This is the best interpretation put forth in this group; unless anyone has a better one, we should accept it." The other members of such a discussion usually did not follow up on these subjects' responses and occasionally expressed resentment towards those who tended to dominate the discussion for their failure to collaborate.

Another leadership role was that of group facilitator: a subject who was concerned with the group's interaction and who posed ques-

tions and summarized responses. These subjects were highly responsive to the group as a social unit. For example, one subject was concerned with "keeping the discussion going" regardless of the progress made toward understanding the poem.

These subjects gave little indication on their assignments that they would later assume facilitating roles in the discussion. One reason for the lack of anticipatory role play may be that on the free-association assignment, subjects did not need to consider their potential roles; they could explore their own responses without concern for any discussion "payoff." This contrasts with many literature assignments in which thoughts while reading are influenced by potential roles, for example, "questions to think about," or the set routines of responding in the class. The teacher, in his own reading prior to class, often rehearses because he assumes that he will be responsible for the success of the discussion. After he has invested such energy, he may assume an omniscient informer role which, ironically, does not often generate a successful discussion.

Another reason for lack of anticipation was that the roles and routines had not been established or were difficult to predict in merely three discussions. In order for a subject to rehearse, he would need to know the established response characteristics of the other members of the group.

Attitude of subjects

Some subjects in one of the groups resented some aspects of the study which in turn affected their attitude toward participation in the discussions. As a result, this group had less enthusiasm in its discussions; the discussions were shorter, less good natured, and more strictly poem-oriented than the discussions of the other two groups.

This also had an effect on the types of responses. The less enthusiastic group devoted more attention to preception/interpretation response while the other groups responded with more engagement/digression. The engagement/digression responses, usually conceived of as unnecessary deviations in many classes, contributed to group cohesion. Subjects would extend these responses by citing similar experiences or feelings. Responses would cluster around a topic such as life in a small town and then circle back to the poem.

Teachers often assume that such digressions are irrelevant to the work. However, in those discussions in which subjects deviated from direct reference to the poem and discussed related experiences, they were able to return to the poem with an understanding of the

texture of the experience depicted. The poem could then be conceived of as a shared experience rather than merely an object for analysis. Moreover, the wider variety of response modes gives those subjects who tend to respond with high engagement/digression more opportunity to participate than do discussions which center on only perception/interpretation. In short, rather than detracting, engagement/digression responses illuminated interpretation.

Case study reports

The results of the groups' responses do not reveal the manner in which individuals' own perceptions shaped their own particular response process. Eight subjects were chosen out of all subjects and interviewed about their response strategy and various factors which affected their strategy. For example, a subject who was consistently high in interpretation would be questioned in order to determine what in previous course work or in his usual conceptualizing led to that strategy.

Most of the eight had some definite conception or theory related to their response strategy, a strategy which was usually consistent, despite differences in poems or the difference between the assignment and discussion.

We know little about how readers conceptually organize their responses, how factors such as individual cognitive style, exposure to different kinds of literary criticism, previous experiences, needs and interests, etc. may influence response. Wolfgang Iser[8] and Walter Statoff,[9] two recent theorists who have contributed to our understanding of the reading process, suggest that the reader hypothesizes ahead about upcoming sections or sentences.The reader needs to foresee to some extent in order to establish a sense of direction. He therefore makes predictions on the basis of his own experiences, "filling in" between sentences, and then testing the actual text against his imagined forecast.

This process involved in reading varies from reader to reader. Some readers attempt to perceive first the whole work, a larger gestalt, and then apply that imagined whole to each part. Others seek out some "kernel," a particular local word, event, evoked experience and then move "outward" from that nexus to a sense of the whole. Some readers are more perceptive than others; some are more willing to bring their own experiences to the work than others; some are more restricted by their academic role than others. Some subjects in this study were highly influenced by group consensus on response strategy in the discussion; that is, some would alter, edit, or delete their assignment responses in order to conform to the group consensus while others would seek to establish the group consensus according to their

preferred response mode.

The following are summaries of four of the case study reports, each representing a different response strategy.

The first, Carol, was a bright, energetic, conscientious student who conceived of her role as that of "critic," a role which she defined in terms of a New Critical approach. This is reflected in her consistently high percentage of interpretation and consistently low percentage of engagement and autobiographical digression; she viewed the latter as irrelevant to her academic role.

Her previous literature courses had a strong influence on her response strategy, not only according to the mode of criticism but also in terms of the "advice" given as to appropriate ways of responding in each course. She cited a number of critical maxims in her interview: "I've been told that to make a poem good it contains a variety of images and it's your job to pull these images out and put them back together again;" "Writing about a poem involves looking at it as objectively as possible;" "In reading a poem you pick out a thread and hang onto it;" "In a discussion you prove what you say."

Her responses were consistent with her theory. She usually began with an image which struck her and interpreted its symbolic meaning. Then she fused the other images together into a larger theme. As she put it, "It seems like there has to be some kind of body, some corpus." "If I can't find if everything is related to something else, I just forget about it." By carefully moving from specifics to an organic sense of the whole, she derived some perceptive interpretations, and because she prefers this slow careful analysis, she enjoyed the assignments.

She also noted that she tends to avoid personal or affective response. She "hates being subjective about poetry because I'm not getting what the author is saying; you forget about your own feelings in reading poetry." She reasoned that subjective response does not provide the concrete evidence for her analysis: " 'My impression is this, and therefore I believe this' — that's not very solid, so you just refrain from these outright statements; you just kind of shroud it, mask it."

She persisted in making this critic versus personal response distinction by noting that with one of the poems, "you can appreciate it from a critic's point of view, but from an aesthetic point of view or my own personal values of what I care for in poetry, it doesn't really strike me as anything special." She sets a learned strategy of critical analysis up against her own "personal values," an unforunate result of either her previous literature instruction or her belief in

such a distinction.

In contrast to Carol, Alice responded with a consistently high percentage of engagement response. She noted that "if you are going to get anything out of poetry, you have to put your own feelings into it . . . . I can't read anything and be totally detached."

In contrast to other subjects whose high engagement was based on autobiographical digression, Alice was engaged more with the verbal ingenuity of the poem, the craftsmanship of the poet's word choice. "Poetry," for Alice, "is a mind working." She tried to "get into the poet's mind...why he does this rather than that...what does it have to do with him?" She responded emotionally to word choices which successfully capture a feeling or experience, the "right" connotation.

She was therefore enthusiastic about the free-association assignment because she could explore various connotations in a "stream of consciousness," as she put it. For example, she could read aloud the lines of the poem and then verbalize various associations.

One of her problems was that she had difficulty in linking together these disparate connotations. She claimed to prefer reading poetry "in very small parts; I never look at the total picture until I've been through it." She had difficulty in retaining any final sense of the whole from one reading to the next. For example, the percentages of interpretation response on seven re-readings were 11, 27, 10, 20, 48, 36, and 25 percents, a response sequence more sporadic than those of other subjects, who usually demonstrated a steady increase in interpretation with each re-reading. She may lack the ability to make conceptual assimilations, but she is not bothered by this: "Poets expect you to be confused...I would be disappointed if I read through and understood everything, because I don't think that's what poetry is meant for." She actually enjoys the position a poem places her in of not knowing all; she is not disappointed in the fact that she "hasn't solved a poem at all."

She was not reluctant to express affective responses in the discussions, and she was critical of her previous literature instruction: "I usually don't agree [with instructors] because I do have this emotional view...in class you don't get that from the professor." A student such as Alice poses a dilemma: although an unstructured response format (such as a journal) may be more conducive to her enjoyment of poetry, should she not also be capable of interpreting in more general terms?

Of the eight case-study subjects, Joan was most affected by the group situation. She responded freely, openly, and at length on the assignments with a high autobiographical digression, but responded very little in the discussions. She was "intimidated by the group,"

and, like many students in the literature class, she became a bystander who sits quietly and watches.

One reason for her reluctance to respond in the group was that she preferred to respond in terms of autobiographical digression, a response mode which was not prevalent in the discussions, so that she did not carry over her assignment response to the discussion.

Another reason for her lack of participation was her conception of discussions as a somewhat arduous, well defined game of academic "impression management." She noted that "the whole system is funny, everybody beating their brains out for a grade....you can see through people in a discussion, trying to impress people." "Some people can get by, by giving a false impression to the instructor....some kids can go through and pick out the right things to let someone else know that they know."

She did not respond at all in the first discussion because she believed that the discussion members were merely trying to impress each other which "alienated me because they jumped in right off the bat....I remained detached and kind of watched them." After the first discussion she believed that others "pegged me as a non-speaker."

Her conception of education-as-game means that she is careful to follow the rules of that game. One of her first responses on an assignment was, "As I'm reading I wonder what should I be thinking," and she later asked, "Am I doing this right?" She was the only subject who expressed concern for potential performance in the discussion, for anticipating and rehearsing responses. She noted that she "Thinks ahead" while reading a work for class: "I want to be prepared....I usually always prepare just for the sake of doing it....if the class would do one part of it, I would pay more attention to a certain part of the assignment." She believes that "when you say something, you can substantiate it" as opposed to "throwing out some wild idea." The tape assignment did help her organize her thinking and gave her "more confidence" for speaking in a later discussion.

Her sense of detachment benefited her in her experience with the poems because she could simultaneously "lose herself" through vicarious identification and also be aware of the nature of that experience. She "feels how he [the speaker of "Moving"] is alone in the present....I know how I can wander into the future and I look on as a detached observer of myself. Like Alice, she had difficulty sustaining any hypothesis about a poem over the re-readings; she consistently switched into the more comfortble role of citing long engagement or autobiographical digression responses.

Joan's value judgments concerning the educational system may be due to the fact that she finds little intrinsic satisaction in her course work; like many college students, she is merely going through the motions. However, the fact that she does enjoy her own reading may mitigate concern with institutional failure — perhaps, unlike many college graduates, she will continue to read literature voluntarily.

Mike had consistently high interpretation and interpretation-of-the-whole responses, particularly in the discussion. He employed a response strategy of focusing on the point of view or social perspective of the poem. He cited his interest in interpersonal relations on which he based his theory that poetry is a form of "communication": "If I know what I want to say you don't even have to have words. The poet puts it into words and the reader has to reorganize it into feeling." The reader, according to Mike, then attempts to "get the essence of the feeling behind it," to complete the communication from poet to reader.

He was quite methodical in organizing his responses in this empathizing process: "You run through a few words and they build up an emotional response. You get the connotations and then I start rambling into it, and then I make a thesis." He then tried out a number of theses: "you constantly modify the idea....and build up a case" trying to refine his sense of the "essence" the poet is communicating. An important feature of this process was his willingness to examine a variety of perspectives. This was evident in the discussions, in which he served as an assimilator, summing up others' perceptions, or, as he described it, serving as an "overseer" of the group.

The other characteristic of his response was his sense of the poet's style. In his written response to one poem, he paraphrased the poem in his own style, a mimicing of the poet's style.

Mike's description of his thought processes is similar to Iser's theory of response. Mike noted that "you need an explanation to fulfill your own expectation." He therefore develops his thesis of "illusion" which orders his thinking and against which he tests the data from the work or rewrites the work: "What the author says and your explanation are not always the same." He attempts to develop a balance between his own illusions about the poem and the data in the poem. For example, in his response to one poem, he "worked out all the images until I didn't have any more nagging uncertainty about any parts of it....I got it into a coherent framework." However, he also was aware of the tenuousness of his framework, and was willing to discover further information in the poem that contradicted his framework.

He enjoyed the free-association assignment because it allowed

him to constantly rework his ideas and also to internalize the poet's style, particularly by re-reading lines aloud on the tape.

Two other case study subjects provided an interesting comparison. Both were high engagement/autobiograhical digression responders. Both enjoyed relating the poem to other events and experiences. However, one asserted that a poem's meaning is relative to the personal associations evoked by the poem while the other made a distinction between associations which are irrelevant to the meaning of the poem and those which are directly related to the poem. Both of these subjects recalled the influence of one course in which the instructor encouraged a variety of response modes and discouraged the notion that a poem has only one meaning.

One of the aspects about the reading process which the free-association task revealed was the manner in which subjects established ties between the work and "other thoughts," that is, their thoughts about themselves and previous experiences. The poems served as a stimulus on both conscious and subconscious levels for thinking about related matters, matters which subjects occasionally fed back into the poem, enhancing their understanding.

Implications for teaching

The finding that each case-study subject had a response strategy which he employed fairly consistently despite differences in poems, assignment tasks, or discussions is important for teachers to take into consideration in making literature assignments and planning classroom activities. It is naive for teachers to expect all students to respond uniformly or with equal enthusiasm or facility to all activities teachers plan and attempt to carry out.

The privately recorded responses contained more digression responses than did the discussions, while those discussions without previous preparation had many more digression responses than those discussions with preparation. This suggests that digression responses are an important phase of response and that teachers should not expect students to launch right into interpretation responses to works read in class.

Secondly, there were more interpretation responses in the discussions which followed the assignments than in those without previous preparation. This suggests that discussion groups which have developed some background understanding of a work are more likely to interpret that work than discussion groups without preparation.

The subjects' novel experiences with the free-association assign-

ments fostered a desire among subjects to share their experiences, particularly by means of engagement responses after the tape assignment. These engagement responses referred back to how the subject had empathized or identified with the poem. This suggests that, particularly in an open-classroom setting, these assignments could motivate students to seek out each other on their own initiative in order to share their experiences with the work. Moreover, the taped as opposed to the written assignment seemed to foster more sharing of engagement responses among students.

The pre-discussion assignments were not beneficial in all cases. Some subjects lost interest in a poem after several re-readings and had no desire to discuss it further. Assignments which require extensive consideration of a work may therefore be counter-productive as preparation for discussion, if the assignment actively serves as a substitute for discussion responses so that students do not participate in discussion or merely regurgitate their thoughts without extending their assignment responses. If the assignment is merely a rehearsal for delivery of "lines," then the discussion becomes an artificial, staged affair.

The findings also indicate that student's response strategies in discussions were functions of individual differences in (among other things) attitudes towards the poem and the task itself. When subjects had a negative attitude toward the discussion, they had little desire to share their responses with others or to extend their assignment responses. This resulted in monologues recalling interpretations from the assignments rather than that subject's rethinking assignment responses. If the teacher hopes to encourage expression of spontaneous responses or collaborative efforts generating novel responses, then he must consider the students' attitudes towards the group. Whether the subjects' conceptions of the usual functions of a discussion coincided with other subjects' conceptions; whether members of the discussions had a voice in deciding on the group's task; whether members believed that the task was worthwhile; whether the task had some intrinsic benefit for subjects; and whether subjects avoided dominating the discussion were factors which affected the subjects' attitudes in this study.

The study found that most case-study subjects had a theoretical justification for their responses. These theories were based primarily on previous classroom experiences rather than their having studied various schools of literary criticism. Apparently it is less a teacher's adherence to a particular school of literary criticism and more the everday classroom procedures employed which shape students' theories of response. Thus, writers of textbooks and curriculum guides on literature instruction should not ignore the importance of seemingly insignificant classroom procedures in shaping students' response strategies.

Personal observations

This study echoes the findings of much previous research in literary response: individual differences in literary response abound. Yet such research has had little effect on the practices of the literature classroom.

In this study, differences among subjects' responses were apparent in two findings (among others): for some subjects, public response in discussions was often an exercise in redundancy, a formalized repetition of previous thoughts; and, on the other hand, the practice of reading a work through once before class or in class and then discussing it resulted in superficial responses, because subjects did not have ample opportunity to think about the work.

Although these findings may seem contradictory, they point more directly towards individual differences, differences which require a teacher's flexible recognition of how much time and effort certain students require with certain works.

Public response becomes an exercise in redundancy when the teacher attempts to prolong discussion of a work which was meant for light reading and, perhaps, no discussion. Rehashing a student's initial reponses undermines his enjoyment of the work and the important notion that the purpose of reading that work was only for enjoyment.

Some students resent having to discuss a work, because, as the study found, responses in discussions were influenced by group consensus on what modes of response were appropriate. They resent having to alter or reformulate their initial responses to conform to group demands and thus find discussions a threatening situation. They react by only restating previous thoughts or by not participating. For other students, the opportunity to share ideas may be welcome.

On the other hand, some students need time to think about and re-read more difficult works. When they are all together in one large group which quickly devours a work in order to produce simplistic interpretation responses, these students who lack the ability to read quickly and carefully simultaneously are really not thinking the poem through. They are dependent on quicker-minded students or the "well-prepared teacher" to formulate their responses, and thus they never go through the process of actively generating their own responses. For these students, the free-association assignments may be helpful, particularly by helping them organize their own thinking: ferreting through various digression associations; relating experiences, other works, movies, etc.; and thus helping them to "place" the work in their own conceptual frameworks.

These findings suggest that the teacher could signal his recognition of each student's particular needs by providing an individualized reading program and choices of a variety of ways in which students may respond. For example, a teacher should allow, and, in fact, encourage responses in the form of works of art, poems, music, and creative dramatics as well as discussion or written essays. He should also recognize that in some cases, no overt response at all is necessary or desirable. Perhaps if more attention were devoted to how students learn merely through reading, then teachers would be more reluctant to stage unnecessary rituals of public response.

If each student does employ a consistent response strategy, as this study found, then the teacher should be able to recognize certain behavior patterns of response and make decisions about classroom activities or book recommendations based on knowing how students think about a work.

Teachers, pre-service and in-service, can learn to appreciate differences among students' strategies by observing students' responses on free-association assignments and/or unstructured discussions. To suggest a few aspects of such training, teachers could analyze and discuss protocols of responses using the Purves categories. A case-study method could be used to discuss how particular group dynamics, self-concepts, attitudes, and abilities are all related to response strategies — each teacher keying in on one student in a discussion.

The study found that although students did have some theoretical conception of how they responded, most had not thought about their response process. However, this should not imply that this lack of self-awareness should be rectified by literature teachers. Making some students more self-conscious of their response process may prove to be an inhibiting factor to enjoyment in reading a work. Other students may find that self-awareness of their strategies may enhance their enjoyment. Instead of discussing only the work, these students could read (or listen to) and discuss fictitious samples of free-association responses. This may be a valuable exercise also for pre-service teachers in helping them understand others' response processes and thereby learning how to talk with students about how they experienced a particular work.

The teacher's role in a literary discussion: some observations

The findings also suggest that certain roles or leadership techniques may serve to enhance collaboration in a group discussion. Some subjects resented other subjects who dominated discussion, an unfortunate tendency of many teachers. Those subjects who prepared well for the discussion in order to present an interpretation for the benefit of enlightening the group did not receive much cooperation.

On the other hand, some subjects who assumed leadership roles were successful in facilitating discussion. These subjects tended to pose questions and were aware of the direction in which the group was moving. Likewise, those subjects who assumed assimilator roles (summarizing the responses of a group) also were helpful in pointing the direction of the discussion for others.

The teacher could watch for how the group develops in "stages," particularly if the group has had no previous preparation with a work. The findings suggest that groups build on initial engagement and digression responses, then proceed to clarification of the facts which leads to interpretation. Beginning by talking about personal experiences or feelings establishes a greater rapport among members, enhancing a positive attitude. If several students begin the discussion with interpretation, it is unlikely that they would want to go back over the initial engagement, digression, or perception responses. However, other students may need to clarify certain facts about the work or to relate their personal experiences to the poem.

The teacher could therefore begin discussions by setting an example himself—citing his own affective response or personal experience, thus legitimatizing his participant role in the discussion. The teacher could also keep track of thematic linkages, how one idea sets off another, in order to occasionally summarize the direction of the discussion.

In the discussions in this study, subjects often failed to follow up or extend a previous comment because they were rehearsing for their next response, often a monologue, and thus were not listening. This was particularly true when subjects were thinking about the work for the first time. One method for alleviating this is to stop the discussion for students to read and think about the work instead of rushing toward a conclusion. Another technique is to designate certain students to listen and follow up on responses.

The free-association as a method of evaluation

The free-association could provide an alternative method of evaluation of students in literature courses, one based on written reports of changes in the student's response process, as opposed to the present system of letter grades based on essays and exams, a system which often undermines efforts to establish trust and collaborative learning.

Educators are realizing that students learn at different rates and in different ways and are adjusting their ways of evaluating accoringly. When students are judged on their ability to compete with others

or to achieve according to "standards" of knowledge about literature established by the teacher, they become dependent upon other sources, a system of mimickry and plagiarism which runs counter to an objective of active formulation of response.

The teacher could help the student realize certain changes in his response process by comparing free-association responses made at different times in the school year. For example, in this study, Alice had difficulty in perceiving any connection between successive re-readings. If, at a later date, her responses indicated connections between re-readings, the teacher could include this information in a written report and discuss that change with the student. These written reports could be collected over the years for a clearer developmental perspective than that provided for only one year. Added to the report would be examples of the student's responses and the student's own description of his response process. The latter could indicate changes on a theoretical level.

The success of these evaluations depends on a number of things. Foremost would be a workable developmental model of response which the teachers could use as a criteria for charting changes. Such a model would also reduce the tendency of the teacher to base reports solely on his own value judgments. The teacher would also need to minimize the student's conception of the free-association as an "essay which will be graded," by giving the student the option of expressing his response in any number of different modes, including film and creative dramatics.

If such reports were required for teachers and replaced the letter-grade system, teachers would have to get to know their students much better than in classrooms as presently structured in order to write sensitive, probing reports. If all teachers wrote reports, they would have information from previous grades to chart developments from elementary school to college. Obviously, this evaluation system could become as regimented as the present one, but it is based on the fluidity of developing response processes rather than a series of often superficial products and performances.

In conclusion, this study suggests that individuals have unique response strategies. Yet, literature teachers continue to standardize the format for response in testing, assignments, discussions, and, in some quarters, use of behavioral objectives. In contrast, if the student while reading a work foresees the classoom as an arena for expressing his own unique responses, then he may develop confidence in sharing his experience, the kind of spontaneous sharing of experience with books found among people who are willing to recommend books to each other. Moreover, if his classmates are each expressing their own mode of experiencing a work, then he may appreciate the power

of literature through its ability to order and disorder each reader's own expectations.

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Everthing You Always Wanted to Know About Having a Poet in the School but didn't know who to ask *

by

Myra Klahr

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As a former teacher, I well remember (with resentment) the many intrusions into my class time: assembly programs that were good but extraneous, bus trips whose destinations were determined by bus schedules, puppet shows, magic shows, entertainment. A whole gamut of activities intrude on one's domain, the classroom. Is a poet in your school just another in a long line of "frills" imposed on you, the teacher, or does a poet play a vital role in developing curriculum?

What does a poet actually do when he comes into your classroom? Essentially, he encourages the kids to write by presenting a "springboard" idea, and by reading poems written on the topic. For example, Kenneth Koch, in the film, "Wishes, Lies and Dreams," presents the idea of writing a poem that mentions a river in every line. He reads excerpts from John Ashbery's book of poems, "Rivers and Mountains." When I, as a poet in the school, introduce the "river" theme, I read both from the Ashbery book and from poems written by other children on the same theme.

Poet's use any number of unusual ideas to loosen kids up. Sometimes they result in "good" poems, but that isn't the main objective here. Rather, the poet tries to generate an excitement about writing: a feeling for the spoken word written on the page. Sometimes, we "take dictation" for the children, regardless of age. We do this particularly when a child seems "stuck" or when we see him not writing as well as he can speak. It is most important for a child to open up what's inside him. After all, it's his unique way of seeing the world and responding to it that makes him a poet. The more he wants to write, the better able he will be to express his unique world. Who else but Warren Walters, an Ardsley, New York fourth grader, could have seen his sneaker in just this way:

Back from the playground
I could hold the Indian Ocean.

Each new idea helps in some way to increase a child's awareness of his surroundings. Jim Klika's third grade at Hillside school in Hastings on Hudson, was intrigued by the idea of spying. The children's senses became increasingly sharp as they observed and wrote down everything they saw, heard and smelled. Finally, I asked them to spy on something unusual: imaginary worlds, historical figures, fictional characters, animals, etc. Paul spied on his goldfish and the bubbles they were making.

Often, a poet encourages "group" poems or collaborations. Sometimes a child selects a single line from an individual poem, to be used in the "class" poem. Other times, the poet asks the children to write just one line specifically for the collaboration. The results are usually outstanding and always inspiring. One of the most exciting collaborations I have seen is "Happy Birthday Mrs. Brunbauer," written by Shirley Friedman's fourth grade at Claremont School in Ossining, N.Y. The children wanted to write a poem for their Science teacher in honor of her birthday. The poet read "Goodby Mr. Koch," a collaboration from Kenneth Koch's book, "Wishes, Lies and Dreams," and suggested that the children write a poem for Mrs. Brunbauer in which each line contained a "crazy" thing she should do for her birthday. Each child chose his favorite lines for a group poem which I am including at the end of this article. Because of his closeness to language and his highly trained ear for sound, the poet helps a child focus on words — their sounds as well as their precise meanings.

Happy Birthday Mrs. Brunbauer-------

For your birthday go to Africa and
search for the rare spotted
dimple ducks egg.
Go out west and take May West's
place.
Celebrate your birthday in Alaska
buy huskies and a fur coat.
Dance with Donald Duck at
Disney World and let the chipmunk
tickle you.
Play tennis in Tennessee.
Float, Float in a balloon high in
the sky.
Go to Williamsburg and bring back
a purple sock.
Visit Peanuts and take Lucy's
place in the outfield

Go to Japan and Climb Mount
Fuji.
Buy a dress and make your
husband jealous.
Dance all night with your husband
in Miami.
Go to an Indian tribe and kiss
the chief.
Ride in a house boat.
Eat in a restaurant and order
a lobster.
Swim with all the fish.
Drink a thick shake.
Climb the highest mountain
Play a trumpet.
Eat an upside down cake
Take a boat ride down the
Mississippi River.
Go to Europe and paint a
picture.
Have a one lady band
with a flute.
Ride across the desert on
an ostrich's back.

Some teachers feel that since they do creative writing with their students, there is no need to have a poet come in to help. I can speak from personal experience: when I started reading and writing modern poetry, words started to mean more to me than I ever imagined they could. There are new sounds in the air; music sounds different; rock music doesn't sound like a waltz. The sounds of modern poetry are unlike the sounds of conventional poetry. A poet introduces both students and teachers to new ideas and sounds of writing. He can do this because he is a specialist. He spends all his time reading and experimenting with language. His life is dedicated to his profession — writing. Teacher and poet can achieve fantastic results by synchronizing their activities. A teacher whose class is already open to new ideas, paves the way for the poet.

Besides working with students, the poet functions as a resource person in writing. In the teacher workshops, he introduces materials for teachers to use after he has left the school. Many poets encourage teachers to write. It is through the encouragement of a poet, Kenneth Koch, that I learned to write. When you, as a teacher, observe a poet's way of working with you, you are in a better position to help a child express himsef. You will be quick to notice what makes you feel "put down" and what makes you want to go on writing. And the more you write, the better.

In deciding which classes should have the poet, administrators often ask which type of child will benefit most from the program. There are obvious benefits for the bright child, despite some difficulties. Sometimes this group is the hardest to work with because the children concentrate on producing "good" poems. The real bonus is the child who doesn't achieve in most areas in school: the slow learner, the child with a learning disability, the underachiever. This is one area in which he cannot fail. Often, these children have strong feelings they have been unable to express.

The question often raised is: How does a program that does not stress punctuation, spelling, or grammar, promote the basic skills of reading and writing? It's a question of timing. When a child has worked on a poem, he loves it and wants it to be "right:" That's where the spelling and punctuation come in — when he cares enough to make it "right." An amazing number of skills are used. I had a fascinating experience as a substitute teacher at the Byram Hills Middle School in Armonk, N.Y. I had a sixth grade student whose main talent seemed to be trouble making. His school achievements were minor. He wrote a personal poem that I liked particularly, and one of his Language Arts teachers suggested that he send it to *Kids Magazine*. Soon after the suggestion, I was in his class, substituting for his teacher. That was the day he decided to send the poem out with a "cover" letter. I was willing to let the poem go out with an informal letter, but he wasn't. He insisted that somewhere in one of his workbooks was the "right" form for a business letter, and he found it. He wrote and re-wrote that letter until it met the high standards he himself had set. This is not an isolated incident. I've seen this happen time and again.

"We'd like a poet, but we can't afford one." I'll ask you now, can you afford not to have a poet working with you? Poet's fees in this program range from $75-100 per day for conducting three hour-long classroom writing workshops for students and one workshop for teachers daily. As coordinator of the Poets in the Schools program, now a statewide program of Poets and Writers, Inc., I have helped schools all over Westchester County set up programs in K-12 grades, which will run for a total of 165 days from September through June, 1973. I recommend having a poet see the same three classes of students for at least 4-5 times, preferably longer. However, if your school can afford only one day, that's better than "no" days!

Do you know about Poets and Writers, Inc., and the New York State Council on the Arts? If you do, you're one up on where I was a year and a half ago. Poets and Writers is a program of the New York State Council on the Arts, and is designed to help New York State Schools, colleges and community groups sponsor visits by poets, fiction writers, and playwrights, by offering financial

assistance and advice. The Poets and Writers program aims at having poets and writers work regularly with students and teachers through repeated visits and extended residencies. Poets and Writers, Inc. provides up to 50 percent of the support for the program; the ratio varies according to available money and number of schools requesting the program.

What are the costs for your district on a per diem basis? Let's assume that the poet's fee is $75. per day. The least amount that Poets and Writers would assume is 1/5 or $15., leaving the school district with a cost of $60. If the school district has budgeted that $60. for Poets and Writers program and requests the program as a shared service through its local BOCES, then the individual BOCES can arrange for the school to be reimbursed for 60 percent of the cost in the following year. In that way, if the school has followed this procedure, the ultimate cost to the school district is $24 per day. A bargain when you think of having a specialist for, roughly, the cost of a substitute teacher.

As administrator of Poets in the Schools for Poets and Writers, I want to help schools use the special skills of poets most effectively. We try to match poets with the needs of a particular school district and its community. I try to advise individual schools as to possible sources of money; e.g., PTA or Cultural Enrichment committees. It is important to set up lines of communication between school and writer. In the end consider: Can you afford "not" to have a poet in YOUR SCHOOL?

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AN ERIC/RCS REVIEW: On Teaching Shakespeare

by Daniel J. Dieterich

Shakespeare's plays are one of the few relatively stable elements in the literature component of English programs which are in tremendous, almost violent, flux. While other books and other authors make their brief debut in the English curriculum and then pass on into the darkness, the study of "the immortal Shakespeare," the man "not of an age, but for all time," has continued largely unaffected by the passing of the years.

The winds of change are finally being felt, however, primarily in the development of new methods for approaching the plays. An indication of the direction in which the wind is blowing can be seen from an examination of some selected documents from the ERIC system.

One of the more written-about methods of interesting students in Shakespeare is through the use of electronic media and visual aids. Gerald Camp's "Shakespeare Lives!" (*Media & Methods,* October 1968) suggests several films of Shakespeare's plays which can be used to both enlighten and entertain today's students. Tom Andrews and Jan Austell's "Who Are These People?" (*Media & Methods,* December 1968; ED 026 386, 5p.) advocates the use of Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* to prepare students for the imaginative reading of that play. Other suggestions for the visual enhancement of Shakespeare classes may be found in Chris Webb's "Shakespeare in the Classroom" (*Visual Education,* March 1972). A large number of audio-visual aids to teaching Shakespeare — records, filmstrips, and literary maps — are also available through the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

Two older works dealing with audio-visual aids may still be quite valuable to English teachers. They are the Educational Film Library Association's *Audio Visual Guide to Shakespeare* (1962, 8p.) and Richard Albert's more recent "Annotated Guide to Audio-Visual Materials for Teaching Shakespeare" (*English Journal,* November 1965, ED 038 383, 12p.). The EFLA's publication lists several films, filmstrips, records, and tape recordings which are useful for the study of Shakespeare. Albert's guide is a longer annotated list, including reference works as well as films, filmstrips, and recordings appropriate for classroom use. It is available from NCTE (Stock No. 08100, 10/$2.00).

Two other documents stress an approach to Shakespeare's plays through characterization. R. W. Reising's "Keeping Shakespeare Alive and Well in the Seventies" (ED 058 204, 2p.) in the Fall 1971 issue of *English in Texas,* suggests the use of pictures of contemporary persons in conjunction with the study of individual plays as a means of keeping the emphasis in Shakespeare study on people. *Shakespeare and the Students* (Shocken Books, Inc., 1970, 206p.) by D. J. Enright, studies *King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, Macbeth,* and *The Winter's Tale* as "plays about people." Both content and tone of voice are discussed in Enright's analysis of the characters as real people placed in plausible situations.

Many teachers are also involved in increasing their students' appreciation of Shakespeare by directly involving them in the performance of one or more Shakespearean plays. Helpful in this regard is *The Theatre's Different Demands: An Approach to the Classroom Teaching of Plays* (1970, ED 046 934, 37p.). This teacher's guide by Mary Hunter Wolf and Victor Miller is designed to introduce high school students to acting in order to provide them with an understanding of the uniqueness of dramatic literature,

particularly Shakespearean drama. Two products of CEMREL, Inc., *An Introduction to Theatre: Reading a Play, Volume 1. Revised Edition* (1968) and *Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar": The Initial Classroom Presentation. An Introduction to Theatre, Volume 2. Revised Edition* (1969), are also quite useful, though only the second volume is available through ERIC (ED 035 657, 165p.). Written by James Hoetker and Alan Englesman, they contain detailed lesson plans, addressed to the high school English teacher inexperienced in drama and designed to enable him to successfully conduct dramatic activities that lead to an understanding and appreciation of printed plays. (Literature units based on the latter documents have been commercially published by Scholastic Book Services.)

A teaching technique based on the comic elements in Shakespeare's plays is advocated in Norman Sanders' *William Shakespeare: Comedian* (1965, ED 030 637, 12p.), an English Association of Ohio monograph, and Michael Lasser's "Shakespeare: Finding and Teaching the Comic Vision" (ED 038 396, 14p.), an article from the December 1969 issue of the *English Record*. Sanders concentrates on the double view of life which Shakespeare presents in all his plays. Lasser is concerned with comedy as a way for students to discover relevance in Shakespeare, as "an escape, not from truth but from despair."

More general discussions of successful methods of teaching Shakespeare are contained in a number of ERIC and NCTE documents. *Shakespeare in School and College* (1964, NCTE Stock No. 38104, 62p.) contains essays on the teaching of Shakespeare and Shakespeare in the high school classroom. *Shakespeare* (1964, NCTE Stock No. 38006, 36p.) is a reprint of a 1964 issue of the *Oklahoma English Bulletin* which dealt with the responsibility of the Shakespeare teacher, resources for teaching *Macbeth*, and other topics. A twelve-week phase-elective Shakespeare course is described in *Phase-Elective English: An Experimental Program for Grades Eleven and Twelve* (1969, ED 037 458, 170p.), issued by the Jefferson County Board of Education of Louisville, Kentucky. For each of the 26 phase-elective courses it describes, this document provides literary objectives, an outline of content, a week-by-week description of activities, suggested teaching approaches, a list of supplementary materials, and a bibliography. An extensive guide to the teaching of Shakespeare in high school is available from the Board of Education of the City of New York (Publications Sales Office, 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201 — $4.00). Entitled *Teaching Shakespeare: Resource Units in Language Arts for Secondary Schools* (1970, 241p.), the guide suggests several techniques — student dramatization, choral reading, reading with a colleague, and the use of filmstrips — which may help to advance the learning process.

The documents discussed above are but a few of those in the ERIC system which deal with teaching Shakespeare in the secondary school and college. More may be found by scanning the pages of the monthly issues of the *Current Index to Journals in Education* (CIJE) and *Research in Education* (RIE). You may purchase complete copies of the ERIC documents mentioned in this article in either microfiche (MF) or hardcopy (HC) from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), P. O. Drawer O, Bethesda, Maryland 20014. Orders must specify quantity, ED number, and kind of reproduction desired, MF or HC. MF costs 65 cents per document; HC costs $3.29 per 100 pages.

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills is sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English in cooperation with the National Institute of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. ERIC's objective is to keep educators informed about current developments in education.